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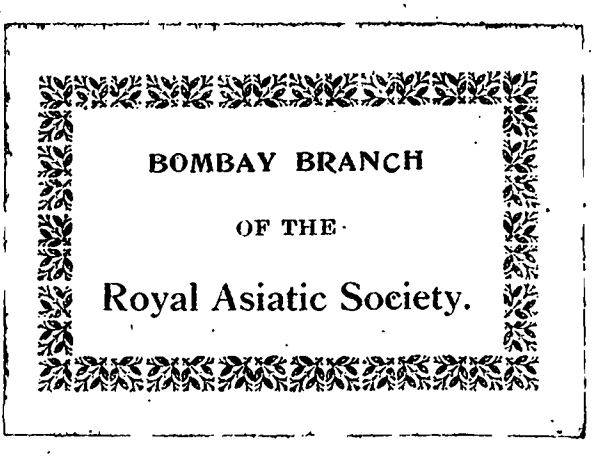

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A MEMOIR

OF

THE REVEREND SYDNEY SMITH.

BY HIS DAUGHTER,

LADY HOLLAND.

WITH

A SELECTION FROM HIS LETTERS,

EDITED BY

MRS. AUSTIN.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LETTERS

OF

THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

EDITED BY

MRS. AUSTIN.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

It is, I think, necessary to offer some explanation of the part I have taken in the selection and arrangement of the following Letters for the press.

It was in compliance with the earnest desire and repeated solicitations of Mrs. Sydney Smith, that I undertook to edit the letters of her lamented husband, and to write a short Memoir, the materials for which she was to furnish. Flattered as I could not but be by her request, I was too sensible of my own incompetence to such a work to engage in it willingly; and it was not till I found that no more competent editor (or none whom she esteemed so) was willing and able to undertake the task, that I yielded to the affecting importunities of my revered friend.

Not long after I received the materials for the projected work, a dangerous illness left me in so shattered a state of health, that every exertion of mind or body was forbidden, and indeed impossible, to me; and I begged Mrs. Smith to receive back the papers she had

entrusted to my care. Still she urged me to wait. While I waited, she arrived before me at the goal which I had so nearly reached. Immediately after her death I sent the papers to Lady Holland, to whom they had been bequeathed by her mother, telling her, that as I had no hope of such a return to health as would enable me to bear the anxiety I should feel in writing a Memoir of her honoured father, I must definitively decline so grave a responsibility. I added, that if my services in the business of selecting and arranging the letters for the press were of any value, she might command them. I ventured to believe that my veneration for Mr. Sydney Smith's character, my earnest desire to set forth those high and solid qualities which the brilliancy of his wit had partly concealed from the dazzled eyes of the public, and my religious care not to make him do after his death that which he never did in life—inflict causeless or envenomed wounds,—might perhaps atone for deficiencies of which I was as sensible as any of his admirers could be.

I entirely concur with Lady Holland in the opinion, that the conditions which alone can justify the publication of private letters are, "that they shall neither hurt the living, injure the dead, nor impair the reputation of the writer." Almost every contributor to this selection will therefore find that I have largely used my power (or rather fulfilled my duty) as Editor, and have omitted whatever I thought at variance with any

one of these conditions. It is hardly necessary to say that not a word has been added.

Not only is the tacit compact which used to protect the intercourses of society now continually violated by the unauthorized publication of conversations and letters, but there are not wanting pretended champions of truth, who assert the claims of the public to be put in possession of all the transient impressions, the secret thoughts, the personal concerns, which an eminent man may have imparted to his intimate friends. Such claims are too preposterous to be discussed. They deserve only to be met by a peremptory rejection. Without the most absolute power of suppressing whatever I thought it inexpedient to publish, I could not have meddled with anything so sacred as private letters. I am persuaded that no person of honour or delicacy will regret the amusement which might perhaps have been purchased by treachery to the dead, or indifference to the feelings of the living.

In insisting, however, on the canons which ought to govern all editors of letters, let me, by no means, be understood to apply them specially to the letters of Sydney Smith. Few editors to whom so large a mass of private papers have been submitted, can say, as I can, with the strictest truth, that I have found nothing for which those who loved and honoured the writer need to blush. My opinion of Sydney Smith's great and noble qualities—his courage and magnanimity, his large humanity, his scorn of all meanness

and all imposture, his rigid obedience to duty—was very high before. It is much higher now, that his inward life has been laid bare before me. He lived, as he says, in a house of glass. He was brave and frank in every utterance of his thoughts and feelings; yet, though I have found opinions to which I could not assent, and tastes which are entirely opposed to my own, I have not found a sentiment unworthy a man of sense, honour, and humanity. I have found no trace of a mean, an unkind, or an equivocal action.

So many sketches of Mr. Sydney Smith's character have been written, and its more intimate parts are so vividly portrayed in his daughter's Memoir, that it would be worse than superfluous for me to attempt to add to them. I cannot however close a work which has long and anxiously engaged my attention, without adverting to a few of the points which have struck me during its progress.

If the interest of a life were proportioned to the traces it leaves behind, few would afford richer materials to the biographer than that of Sydney Smith. But the field on which the champions of truth have to do battle is often obscure, the conflict doubtful, the victory unperceived till long after the combatants have ceased to exist. The story of their lives is marked by none of the striking incidents which mark the career of men of action.

To understand the full significance of such a life as Sydney Smith's, we must ask ourselves what he

accomplished. That he was the acknowledged projector of the Edinburgh Review, one of the early guardians of its principles (as appears from some of his letters to Jeffrey), and one of its most distinguished and powerful contributors, would of itself afford a satisfactory answer to this question. It is clear that he himself, though no man was less inclined to overrate the value of his own productions, looked back with a just satisfaction on the influence of that journal on public opinion. In a letter to Lord Jeffrey, dated Foston, 1825, he says, "It must be to you, as I am sure it is to me, a great pleasure to see so many improvements taking place, and so many abuses destroyed;—abuses upon which you, with cannon and mortars, and I, with sparrow-shot, have been playing for so many years." And again, in a letter to Mrs. Crowe (January 6, 1840): "I printed my reviews to show that I had not passed my life merely in making jokes, but had made use of what little powers of pleasantry I might be endowed with, to discountenance bad, and to encourage liberal and wise principles."

This was his own view of his vocation. In order to estimate his success in it, to trace the operation of his mind on the public mind (and hence on the public affairs) of England, we ought to present a complete and accurate view of its state at the beginning of his career. Such a retrospect is out of the question here. But we may confidently affirm that every day more clearly shows the depth of stolid prejudices, stupid

and malignant antipathies, and time-honoured abuses, out of which we have emerged.

Many of the giants Sydney Smith combated are not only slain, but almost forgotten; and thus the very completeness of his success tends to efface from the minds of the present generation the extent of their obligations to him. But it ought never to be forgotten that, at the time he buckled on his armour, all these had nearly undisputed possession of the field. To combat them was then a service of real danger. The men who now float on the easy and rapid cufrent of reform are apt, in the intoxication of their own facile triumphs, to forget the difficulties and the perils which their predecessors had to encounter. Those who now represent the most conservative opinions would then have passed for rash and dangerous innovators; reforms long since accomplished would then have been regarded as visionary or dangerous. The French Revolution—the fruitful parent of evils, of which no eye can yet discern the termination—had then utterly disordered the minds of men; agitated by the wildest expectations of good, or terrors of evil, to result from that explosion of undisciplined popular will. It was in the midst of this universal frenzy and panic, that Sydney Smith's clear and sound understanding, neither dazzled by visions of impracticable good, nor alarmed by shadows of imaginary evil, seized upon those principles of which he was through life the dauntless and inflexible advocate.

Much has been said of the extraordinary faculties which he brought to this undertaking; yet the power which he exercised over the public mind, when his own powers were roused, has hardly been sufficiently insisted on. What other private gentleman of our day, unconnected with Parliament, without office, rank, or fortune, has been able, by a few pages from his pen, to electrify the country as he did by the publication of 'Peter Plymley's Letters'? Or to excite the feelings of two nations, as he did, by his letters to the Americans? Or to fight, single-handed, against the combined power of the Ministry and of the dignitaries of the Church, a battle in which he carried public opinion along with him? If such were the effects produced by one in so obscure a situation, what might he not have effected if placed in a position to exercise a more direct influence on the councils and affairs of the country?

He was a giant when roused, and the goad which roused him was Injustice. He was clear from envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, and incapable of any littleness. He was ever ready to defend the weak. He showed as much zeal in saving a poor village boy, as in aiding a Minister of State. His hatred of every form of cant and affectation was only equalled by his prompt and unerring detection of it. Without admitting that the vice of hypocrisy is peculiarly English, we must confess that some of the forms which simulated virtue assumes in this country are not only,

in common with all simulations, offensive to the love of truth, but are peculiarly repulsive to good sense and good taste. And there never was a man in whom they were calculated to excite more disgust than the brave, frank, and high-spirited gentleman whose Letters are before us. For in him a passion for truth was enlightened by the utmost perspicacity of mind, and the most acute sense of the ludicrous and unseemly.

It must also be constantly borne in mind that Mr. Sydney Smith did not regard Christianity as an ascetic religion, but as a religion of peace, and joy, and comfort. We say this, not in justification of the view, which it would be wholly out of place to discuss here, but of the consistency of him who held it. It was in perfect conformity with this belief, that he encouraged every social pleasure and every taste for innocent enjoyment. These things he regarded not as lamentable concessions to the demands of a sinful nature, but as praiseworthy endeavours to mitigate the evils and sufferings of humanity, and hence in perfect harmony with the character and designs of a benevolent Creator.

It is needless to insist on the generous audacity with which he formed and held his opinions, or the gallantry with which he threw himself into the breach to assert an unpopular truth, which others were "too timid to express for themselves."* All this is familiar. But we see also that the boldness and vigour with

* See letter to Mr. Bedford, of Bristol, January 13, 1829.

which he proclaimed his opinions were wholly without the tenacity or irritability of self-love: "You know that a short argument often convinces me," he says to Lord Grey. And, again, where he mentions Sir Robert Peel's projected repeal of the Corn Laws, how candidly he avows his present disapprobation of that measure!—how open is his mind to arguments in its favour! There is something as magnanimous as it is rare in this union of fearless candour with openness to conviction.

When we consider the tremendous weapons with which he came armed into the world,—what powers he possessed of inflicting pain, and of adorning falsehood or immorality with the dazzling gems of his wit, we cannot withhold from him a feeling of gratitude for the generous and indulgent temper which led him to spare the weak, and for the high principle and taste which kept the precious talent entrusted to him pure, bright, and untainted. Never was wit so little addressed to the malignant, base, or impure passions of mankind. To this his Letters, poured forth out of the abundance of his fearless heart and high spirits, bear ample evidence.

Lastly, I have been much struck with the perfect arrangement and symmetry of his life. He is never the sport of circumstances; but throughout the battle of life we find him determined to do his duty in whatever circumstances it shall please God to place him. This determination he carried into the most

trifling details of domestic life. Whatever he did, he did it with all his might. Nothing was neglected, slurred over, or left to chance. The order in which he kept his accounts might serve as a model to any man of business; and we have seen with what energy he introduced the same order into the affairs of the Chapter of which he was a member.

This is no place for a dissertation on his literary merits. Yet I can hardly omit to remark how entirely they bore the stamp of his character. Never was the saying, "le style c'est l'homme," more applicable. Prompt, fearless, natural and easy, going straightforward to the object, there is no laborious research or timorous hesitation as to the words in which falsehood shall be exposed, or truth uttered. He was little indebted to books. His vigorous mind and fertile imagination supplied him with all he wanted; and the manliness of his character gave force and freedom to all he wrote.

The following remarks on Mr. Sydney Smith's style, by Sir Henry Holland, which were given to me by Mrs. Sydney Smith, are so just and discriminating, that I have begged permission to print them. They were called forth by these words, which I had quoted from the letter of a friend:—"If Mr. Sydney Smith had not been the greatest and most brilliant of wits, he would have been the most remarkable man of his time for a sound and vigorous understanding and great reasoning powers; and if he had not been dis-

tinguished for these, he would have been the most eminent and the purest writer of English."

"Mrs. Austin's friend," says Sir Henry Holland, "has admirably denoted the three eminent peculiarities of Mr. Sydney Smith's writings—his vigorous sense, his wit, and the pure and masculine English of his style. The latter quality has scarcely been sufficiently noticed in comments on his works. Those higher qualities of reason and of humour have tended, it may be, to keep it out of sight.

"I should be inclined to note two other peculiarities of his writings, which have not been enough dwelt upon. One of these is, the *suddenness* with which he enters on his subject. No distant approaches by preface or dissertation. He plunges at once into his argument, and never loiters or lingers in it when he has compassed his conclusion. In no case does he drain a subject to the dregs, but always leaves his readers lamenting that he has come to an end.

"The other peculiarity (akin to the former, and often exceedingly happy in its effect) is what may be termed the *unexpectedness* of his manner of writing. He does not bind himself down to any servile rules of composition, or formal methods of argument. You always feel him to be a free and unshackled inquirer. He passes abruptly from one part of his subject to another, and, as suddenly, from exquisite wit to the gravest and most profound reason.

"He was in truth equally fearless in the manner

and method of his works, as in the opinions and conclusions it was his object to enforce."

High as Mr. Sydney Smith's reputation stood during his life, it has unquestionably risen since his death. If not more wide-spread, it is more just, and more worthy of his great moral and intellectual qualities. Still more perfect justice will, doubtless, be rendered to him by posterity. Admiration of his wit will become subordinate, as it ought to be, to respect for the purposes to which it was applied, and for the good sense by which it was guided.

Already this appreciation has begun. And it is worthy of remark that the hasty and unregarded productions of his pen which were only saved from the flames by the pious hand of affection, have tended greatly to raise his reputation as a sound and original thinker.

There is one other point upon which I feel bound by gratitude to touch. Within our times, no man has done so much to obtain for women toleration for the exercise of their understandings and for the culture of their talents, as Sydney Smith. Others have uttered louder complaints, and have put forward loftier claims, on their behalf. But in this, as in all his demands for reform, Sydney Smith kept within the bounds of the safe and the possible. To those who knew him it is unnecessary to declare that he had no desire to convert women into pedants, to divest them of any of the attributes or attractions of their sex, or to engage in

the vain attempt to create for them a new and independent position in society.

What he asked for women was, opportunity and encouragement to make themselves the intelligent companions of men of sense; or to furnish themselves with ideas and pursuits which might give interest to lives otherwise insipid and barren. These demands, consonant with nature and reason, he urged in a way to disarm opposition and vanquish prejudice. Sydney Smith was too completely above cant and imposture to deny the influence and the value of youth and beauty. But he laboured to induce women to acquire some substitutes for beauty, some resources against old-age, some power of commanding attention and respect when the victorious charms of youth have fled. A new era in the moral and intellectual condition of women dates from his Lectures at the Royal Institution. And though it is to be regretted that a task which might have worthily employed the most vigorous pen has devolved on female hands, it is by them, perhaps, that this tribute of respect, affection, and gratitude is most fitly paid.

SARAH AUSTIN.

Cromer, October, 1854.

P.S.—I have generally omitted not only the usual formulæ at the conclusion of letters, but many continually recurring expressions of kindness and affection, friendly greetings, domestic news sought and

communicated. They show his kindly recollections of great and small, but their repetition would occupy much space, and might become wearisome to the reader.

It is not pretended that the following Letters are of equal merit and importance. They are, on the contrary, very unequal. The great object I had in view in their selection was, to present a true and complete picture of the writer under his various aspects; to show that the formidable critic, the admired wit, the earnest and intrepid champion of truth and freedom, the man in whom honour, sincerity, and principle were paramount, was also full of kindly affections and generous indulgence; and did not think it a waste of time and wit to delight the weaker part of mankind—women and children—with his playful sallies. The Letters are intended as illustrations of a thoroughly genuine, unaffected, and many-sided character; and they bear the impress of the peculiar mood of the writer's mind, the peculiar circumstances by which he was surrounded, or the peculiar character and position of the person to whom they are addressed.

This was the view taken by Mrs. Sydney Smith. "Enough there is," she says, in a letter to me, "to

show the affectionate playfulness of his nature, his manly wisdom and goodness, and the calm and right-minded view he takes of politics and of human affairs in general. His honesty and his candour are also on every suitable occasion displayed, so we want nothing more for his just portraiture."

If, in my ignorance of facts or persons referred to in these Letters, I have suffered any allusion to pass which can give the slightest pain, I can only say it is not alone unintentional, but completely at variance with my intentions. Whatever be the faults of the selection, I beg that it may be distinctly understood that they are to be imputed to me; and that no portion of the responsibility rests on Lady Holland. She has been so good as to continue to me the confidence which her mother was pleased to repose in me, and my choice (out of the materials furnished to me) has been free.

Lady Holland has most appropriately dedicated her Memoir to the memory of her Mother. Be it permitted to me to add my respectful tribute to that faithful and devoted spirit which has inspired and directed my humble labours. To me, the foregoing selection will always appear her work. But for her entire confidence in the claims of him she had loved and revered through life,—a confidence which no discouragements could shake,—this volume would probably never have existed. It was she who collected, transcribed, and arranged the mass of letters out of

which I had to choose, and who never could be brought to believe that the public would be indifferent (as many thought) to such a life, or unimproved by such an example. If I have anything to congratulate myself upon, it is, that I never, for a moment, doubted that she was right.

Not that I was blind to the difficulties. Mr. Sydney Smith had long enjoyed a reputation perfectly unmatched for a gift the most dazzling, and the most evanescent of all intellectual gifts. Those who had heard him talk, felt with a sort of despair, how pale a shadow of the reality, any description of him must inevitably be. Many, if not most, of his surviving friends and associates looked coldly on the project; and it seemed to be the general opinion that there was "nothing to tell," and that any attempt to draw an enduring portrait of the most brilliant of conversers would be a failure.

But all this was no answer to one who rested his claims to the admiration and respect of mankind on far higher qualities. To convey to others her own conviction of his eminent virtues, was the one remaining deep and earnest purpose of her life. Nothing could be more affecting and more venerable than this resolute struggle of a loving heart with the difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of its pious wishes. Her pride in her husband was only equalled by her humility about herself; and nothing could persuade her that she was competent to do

what she so intensely longed to see done. I may, I hope, be excused for quoting a few sentences from the many touching letters I received from Mrs. Sydney Smith, while this struggle was going on.

I am encouraged to do this by some words from one of the few surviving early friends of Mr. Sydney Smith; one whose opinion is entitled to the utmost deference—Lord Murray. "If," he says, "you could add anything to what you have already said in your Preface* respecting Mrs. Sydney Smith's urgent desire that some account of her husband's life should be written, you would no way exceed the truth; for it was a matter constantly weighing on her mind during the last years of her life. Lady Holland must therefore have felt herself bound, as a matter of duty, to do what she has done."

In December, 1845, Mrs. Sydney Smith wrote to me:—"Most persons, of whose good sense and discretion I have a high estimate, think that any little Memoir, illustrated by genuine letters, it would be yet too soon to publish. I confess it is foregoing the last gratification that remains to me—the hope of seeing that published of him, which to me far exceeds all the brilliancy of head that the world took cognizance of, but which I least valued; well knowing what the world knew not, the perfection of his heart, and his fearless love of truth. If delayed, I can never hope to see it; but I am not so selfish as for an instant to

* To the unpublished edition.

oppose my own gratification to that which is deemed expedient for his sake. Much did I wish Lord Jeffrey to have done this, but his age and infirmities press too hardly upon him now."

In March, 1846, she writes:—"I shall never see the completion of the Memoir it would have been such an unspeakable satisfaction to me to see perfected. Some, the best judging perhaps, say, *it is too soon*, as the letters and incidents relate to many living persons. I have therefore yielded up the great and now only remaining delight I could have felt, at the suggestion of the wiser and more fastidious of my friends; in the meantime I go on collecting."

In June, 1849, I received the following letter:—

"My dear Mrs. Austin,

"I hardly know how to make my request, so sensible am I to the liberty I am about to take with you; but to waste no more of your time in words, I will at once state my earnest desire.

"*Much more* that is excellent of my dear husband is deserving of notice than is derivable from his 'Works;' yet who will record it? Of his great talents, he has himself taken care; of these, no one doubts. Of the far more admirable qualities of his mind and heart, the world knows nothing! His playfellows are almost all gone. Who that well knew him, and is capable of appreciating him, will undertake the task?

"I prefer writing, rather than saying my wishes to you, because it will be less painful to you to write 'No' than to speak it, should my anxious desire prove objectionable to you."

After repeated endeavours on my part to induce Mrs. Sydney to seek some more competent Editor, I received a letter containing these words:—"My days, I suspect, cannot be many, and thence my urgency. Pray attribute it to the real motive—the desire to see that done which shall fill up the measure of my wishes. I have arranged his letters by the years and months, so that he indirectly tells the incidents of his own life. But now comes my own incapacity. I think every word he ever wrote so precious, that my better judgment is blinded, and I should not be able to erase a line or a thought. Here I greatly want one on whose just perception, on whose right feelings of affectionate regard not only for him, but for his fame, I can implicitly rely."

But though she speaks of her incapacity, the following passage from a subsequent letter shows what a just and distinct conception she had formed of what ought to be attempted:—

"An eventless life must be made up of character, of comments by friends, of a narrative of the immense difficulties through which, without interest, without connections, with the heavy weight of poverty on his shoulders, he dared bravely and honestly, and

at all hazards, to struggle against bigotry, and every kind of abuse that militated against human happiness, but which struggle was sure to lessen his own chance of success.

"Such mixed materials cannot come up to the magnitude of his deserts; yet if it be the *only* thing that remains to his survivors to do, that the memory of so much that was admirable and affectionate in private life, as well as great and noble in the wider range of human interests (which he ever strenuously advocated) may not perish, it is surely expedient that it should be done. It is only in the fullness and freshness of familiar correspondence that are illustrated the genuine feelings and character."

Such were the influences under which I undertook my task. Fortunately for the public, ill health prevented my attempting the more important part of it, which has thus fallen into the only hands competent to do it justice. The humbler portion which I retained has been executed with a constant reference to the wishes and opinions of her from whom I received my commission, and to whom, though departed, I have never ceased to consider myself responsible.

SARAH AUSTIN.

Weybridge, May 21*st*, 1855.

LETTERS.

1.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Broomsgrove, 1801.

My dear Jeffrey,

Why so modest as to stand for a place in Scotland? Who humbled you into a notion that you were sufficiently destitute of probity, originality, and talents to enjoy a chance of success? I left you with far more adequate conceptions of yourself,—with *ingentes animos angusto in corpore;* I left you with a permanent and ingenuous blush for your venal city, and in a short month you deem yourself qualified in corruption to be a candidate for its honours.*

Many thanks, my dear Jeffrey, for the pleasant expressions of goodwill your letter contains. The friendship of worthy, sensible men I look upon as the greatest blessing of life. I have always felt myself flattered that you did not consider my society beneath your attention.

I think to be at Edinburgh about the end of August. We will pass many evenings together, arguing and joking, amidst eating and drinking! above all, being stupid when we feel inclined,—a rare privilege

* This was written during the dictatorship of Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville).

of friendship, of which I am frequently glad to avail myself. It will cost me much to tear myself away from Scotland, which however I must do when the fulness of time is come. I shall be like a full-grown tree transplanted,—deadly sick at first, with bare and ragged fibres, shorn of many a root!

Remember me to the aged Horner, and the more aged Seymour: I love these sages well. I think Leyden had better take Scotch preferment first, which will leave his chance for Indian appointments *in statu quo*, and put a hundred pounds a year in his pocket. I cannot imagine that your despondency in your profession can be rational; but however, you know *that* profession, and I know you, and when we meet, it will make a good talk over hyson.

Remember me to little —— ——; she is a clever little girl, but full of indiscretion, and inattentive to women, which is a bad style of manners.

Parr I know perfectly well; his conversation is infinitely beyond his books, as his fame is beyond his merits. Mackintosh is coming to Edinburgh, I believe, where I suppose you will see him.

My dear Jeffrey, Mrs. S. sends her best compliments.

SYDNEY SMITH.

2.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

July, 1801.

My dear Jeffrey,

After a vertigo of one fortnight in London, I am undergoing that species of hybernation, or suspended vitality, called a pleasant fortnight in the country. I behave myself quietly and decently, as becomes a

corpse, and hope to regain the rational and immortal part of my composition about the 20th of this month.

Nothing has pleased me more in London than the conversation of Mackintosh. I never saw so theoretical a head which contained so much practical understanding. He has lived much among various men, with great observation, and has always tried his profound moral speculations by the experience of life. He has not contracted in the world a lazy contempt for theorists, nor in the closet a peevish impatience of that grossness and corruptibility of mankind, which are ever marring the schemes of secluded benevolence. He does not wish for the *best* in politics or morals, but for the best which can be attained; and what that is he seems to know well. Now what *I* object to Scotch philosophers in general is, that they reason upon man as they would upon a divinity; they pursue truth, without caring if it be *useful* truth. They are more fond of disputing on mind and matter than on anything which can have a reference to the real world, inhabited by real men, women, and children; a philosopher that descends to the present state of things is debased in their estimation. Look amongst our friends in Edinburgh, and see if there be not some truth in this. I do not speak of great prominent literary personages, but of the mass of reflecting men in Scotland.

Mackintosh is going to India as lecturer; I wish you could find a similar situation in that country, but not before *I* leave Scotland. I think it would be more to your taste than the Scotch Bar; and yet you want nothing to be a great lawyer; and nothing to be a great speaker, but a deeper voice, slower and more simple utterance, more humility of face and neck, and a greater

contempt for *esprit*, than men who *have so much* in general attain to.

I have not the least idea when I shall return to Edinburgh; I hope, the beginning of August. There seems to be no belief in invasion, and none in plots, which are now become so ridiculous that every one laughs at them.

Read Parr's sermon, and tell me how you like it. I think it dull, with occasional passages of eloquence. His notes are very entertaining. You will find in them a great compliment to my brother.

SYDNEY SMITH.

3.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Burnt Island, June, 1802.

My dear Jeffrey,

With the inculpative part of *your* criticisms on *mine* I very much agree; and, in particular, am so well aware of that excessive levity into which I am apt to run, that I think I shall correct it.

Upon the point of *severity*, I beg you to recollect the facts. That —— is a very stupid and a very contemptible fellow no one pretends to deny. He has been hangman for these ten years to all the poor authors in England, is generally considered to be hired by Government, and has talked about Social Order till he has talked himself into £600 or £700 per annum. That there can be a fairer object for critical severity I cannot conceive; and though he be not notorious in Edinburgh, he is certainly so in London. If you think that the violence of the attack may induce the generality of readers to sympathize with the sufferer rather than

with the executioner, in spite of the recollection that the artificer of death is perishing by his own art, *then* your objections to my criticism are good, for the very opposite reason to that you have alleged; *not* because they are too severe; but because, by diminishing the malice of the reader, they do not attain the maximum of severity.

You say the readers will think my review long. Probably. If it is amusing, they will not: if it is dull, I am sorry for it,—but I can write no better. I am so desirous of attacking this time-serving ——, that I cannot consent to omit this article, unless my associates consider their moral and religious characters committed by it; at the same time, I will, with great pleasure, attempt to modify it.

I am very much obliged to you for your animadversions on my inaccuracies, and should be obliged to you also to correct them. One of the instances you mention is rather awkward than incorrect, but had better be amended. I wrote my views exactly as you see them; though I certainly made these blunders, not in consequence of neglect, but in spite of attention.

I will come over soon if I can, not to detect Scotticisms, but to enjoy the company of Scotchmen. Just now I am expecting Dugald Stewart and his spouse.

I have been so very bitter lately against authors, and find so much of the *infusum amarum* still remaining in my style, that I am afraid you will not think my answer to your expostulation a very gracious one. If you do think so, pray think otherwise: you cannot be too candid with me. You will very often find me too vain for correction, but never so blind to the value of a frank and manly character as not to feel real

gratitude, when it consults my good, by pointing out my errors.

SYDNEY SMITH.

4.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Tuxford, 1803.

My dear Jeffrey,

Your very kind letter I received at the very moment of departure. I left Edinburgh with great heaviness of heart: I knew what I was leaving, and was ignorant to what I was going. My good fortune will be very great, if I should ever again fall into the society of so many liberal, correct, and instructed men, and live with them on such terms of friendship as I have done with you, and you know whom, at Edinburgh. I cannot see what obligations you are under to me; but I have so little objection to your thinking so, that I certainly shall not attempt to undeceive you in that opinion, or in any other which is likely to make you think of me more frequently or more kindly.

I have found the country everywhere full of spirit, and you are the only male despondent I have yet met with. Every one else speaks of the subjugation of England as of the subjugation of the Minotaur, or any other history in the mythological dictionary. God bless you, my dear Jeffrey! I shall always feel a pride and happiness in calling myself, and in showing myself, your friend.

S. S.

P.S.—I beg leave to except the Tuxford waiter, who desponds exactly as you do.

5.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

No date: about 1803.

Dear Jeffrey,

Though Mrs. Jeffrey will not let you come for any length of time, will she not permit you to come for two days, if we give bond to send you back on Wednesday? Pray reply to this interrogation by return of post, and in the affirmative if you can. I beg leave to disagree both with Horner and yourself about 'Etymologicon Magnum,' which I think written with great spirit and dexterity of manner, and with acuteness and justness in point of argument. I think some of your expressions incorrect, but you are not too civil by a single bow or smile; you have your imagination in very good order through the whole of it, and I exhort you to think extremely well of your power of writing—a task which, I trust, you will not find very unpleasant or difficult. The other subjects of your note I will reserve till we meet.

Sydney Smith.

6.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

77, *Upper Guildford-street,*
November 30, 1803.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have the pleasure of informing you that it is the universal opinion of all the cleverest men I have met with here, that our Review is uncommonly well done, and that it is perhaps the first in Europe. I shall return with a million compliments, and some offers of assistance. I have thoroughly talked over the matter

with ——, and shall give you the result of our conversation.

If any book enjoys a greater reputation here than you can conjecture it would from its title, we may send you information of it; and for a monthly search for foreign books you may depend upon us.

I will stop such books as I want myself; but you had better give Horner a caution against stopping more books than he wants, as he is a sort of literary tiger, whose den is strewed with ten times more victims than he can devour.

Your journey to India must entirely depend upon the influence of Mackintosh with Government upon literary topics; he is much inclined to befriend you; but the whole business is in a very glimmering state, and you must not think much about it.

We are all well. I have been spending three or four days in Oxford in a contested election; Horner went down with me, and was much entertained. I was so delighted with Oxford after my long absence, that I almost resolved to pass the long vacation there with my family, amid the shades of the trees and the silence of the monasteries. Horner is to come down too: will you join us? We would settle the fate of nations, and believe ourselves (as all three or four men who live together do) the sole repositories of knowledge, liberality, and acuteness.

I will endeavour to send you a sheet as soon as possible, but cannot do so as soon as you mention.

SYDNEY SMITH.

7.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

London (*no date, but either* 1803 *or* 1804).
8, *Doughty-street.*

My dear Jeffrey,

I send you all that you are to expect from me. The geographical names, which are so badly written, you will be able to decipher by the assistance of Tooke's 'Survey of the Russian Empire'; you will exercise your editorial functions of blotting and correcting at full liberty. In my last letter I objected strongly to hackney writers; I do so still; perhaps I shall be able, in course of time, to discover some very useful coadjutors above this rank.

Everybody speaks in high terms of the Review, and deprecates any idea of its extinction; strain every nerve to keep it up; it will give you reputation.

Playfair has supped with me. Of Horner business has prevented me from seeing much; he lives very high up in Gordon-court, and thinks a good deal about mankind; I have a great veneration and affection for him, and depend upon him for a good deal of my society. Yours kindly,

Sydney Smith.

8.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

London (*no date, presumed* 1803 *or* 1804).

My dear Jeffrey,

I believe I have transmitted to you, for this number, as much as will make two sheets, which was the amount I promised. I would have been better than my promise, but for reasons unfortunately too good. We shall be most truly glad to see you in England,

but what will become of the articles in your absence? for, situated as you are, your whole life is a crisis.

Mrs. Sydney is pretty well and slowly recovering from her shock,* of which your kindness and your experience enable you to ascertain the violence. Children are horribly insecure: the life of a parent is the life of a gambler.

I have seen Erskine. Murray will tell you how he appears to me; but a man coming from Dunse to London is of course stunned, and he must be a very impudent or a very wonderful man if he is not. Do you know anybody who would go out Professor to a Russian University?—about £800 per annum, coals and candles gratis, and travelling expenses allowed, if sent to Siberia. A perfect deadness in the literary world. Your friend Mackintosh sails early in January, to the universal sorrow of his friends.

The Swintons are come to town, and are to bring me your portrait, as large as life I presume, as Mr. Swinton says in his note, I will put in my pocket a little parcel I have for you. You see I am as impertinent as ever, and I assure you, my dear Jeffrey, as affectionate towards you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

9.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London, 1804.

My dear Jeffrey,

I can hardly believe my own eyes when they inform me that I am up, dressed, and writing by eight o'clock in the morning; and as there is nobody near by whose

* The loss of her infant son.

perceptions I can rectify my own, the fact will probably be undecided through the whole of my letter. To put the question to an intellectual test, I have tried an act of memory, and endeavoured to form a distinct image of the editor of the Edinburgh Review; but he appears to me of a stature so incredibly small, that I cannot venture to say I am awake, and my mind in a healthy and vigorous state: however, you must take me as you find me. Talking of the Edinburgh Review, I hardly think the article on Dumont is much liked by those whose praise I should be most desirous you should obtain; though it conciliates the favour of men who are always ready to join in a declaration of war against all works of speculation and philosophical enterprise; but when I speak in dispraise of this article, I only contrast it with what you have done better; for, in spite of its errors (if any such there be), it would make the fortune of anybody else.

I certainly, my dear Jeffrey, in conjunction with the Knight of the Shaggy Eyebrows,* do protest against your increasing and unprofitable scepticism. I exhort you to restrain the violent tendency of your nature for analysis, and to cultivate synthetical propensities. What is virtue? What's the use of truth? What's the use of honour? What's a guinea but a d—d yellow circle? The whole effort of your mind is to destroy. Because others build slightly and eagerly, you employ yourself in kicking down their houses, and contract a sort of aversion for the more honourable, useful, and difficult task of building well yourself.

I think you ought to know Horner too well by this time to expect his article on Malthus before you see it.

* Francis Horner, Esq.

The satire against me I have not yet read. One of the charges against me is, I understand, that I am ugly; but this is a mere falsehood, and a plain proof that the gentleman never can have seen me. I certainly am the best-looking man concerned with the Review, and this John Murray* has been heard to say behind my back. Pray tell the said J. Murray that three ladies, apparently much agitated, have been here to inquire his direction, calling him a base, perfidious young man.

I am extremely sorry for poor Alison: he is a man of great delicacy, and will be hurt by the attack of this scoundrel. Dumont is certainly displeased with the Review. Most sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

10.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London, 1804 (*or* 1805).

* * * * *

—— —— is here, and will certainly settle in Scotland next winter. She is, for a woman, well-informed and very liberal: neither is she at all disagreeable; but the information of very plain women is so inconsiderable, that I agree with you in setting no very great store by it. I am no great physiognomist, nor have I much confidence in a science which pretends to discover the inside from the out; but where I have seen fine eyes, a beautiful complexion, grace and symmetry, in women, I have generally thought them ama-

* Now a Lord of Session, and one of the few early and faithful friends of Sydney Smith still surviving.—ED.

zingly well-informed and extremely philosophical. In contrary instances, seldom or ever. Is there any accounting for this?

John Playfair dined here yesterday, and met Whishaw. We had a pleasant day,—at least I had.

If I can meet with any one who I think will do for the Review, I will certainly stimulate him. Such a man is Malthus,—but you have many workmen of that stamp.

Tell Jus Thompson that Miss Fox thinks his review of Darwin one of the most sensible in the whole book. Exhort him also never to forget the battle of Galen's head, and that I shared with him the danger. God bless you, dear Jeffrey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

11.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

No date, but believed about 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

You are raving mad if you take the least notice of ——. Let nothing—not even the pleasantry and success of an answer you might write—tempt you to do it. It is quite out of his power to do you the least harm, and out of yours to do him any: he is perfectly invulnerable by his degradation, and, from the same cause, innoxious. I beg and entreat you to lay aside all thoughts of an answer. I have read through his pamphlet, and never read such dull trash. What is the history of my escape?

I cannot say I am much struck with your Reid. I do not quite agree with you in your observation upon the science of metaphysics, nor with the differ-

ence you have attempted to establish between observation and experiment; but there is in that article quite enough of acuteness, good sense, and good writing to render it an ornament to the work, the character of which will not, in my opinion, suffer by the present number. The two articles which pleased me most were Izarn and D'Agnesi; I suspect them both to be from Playfair. ——'s review is too coarse—some parts absolutely ungentlemanlike. The great horror of the review is the *ge* in *gelidus* being made long; I was forced to break it to Elmsley by degrees.

If I were to write on in the Review, I would certainly not conceal myself, but I am much afraid it may not be in my power. I am engaging in my profession, and determined to write a book. We shall be heartily glad to see you if you come here. You will take some time in getting acquainted with the R——s, but you will succeed at last, and they are really worth the trouble: but do not talk lightly before them on serious subjects,—you will terrify them to death. I shall always love Edinburgh very dearly. I know no man of whose understanding and principles I have a higher opinion than I have of yours. I will come and visit Edinburgh very often if I am ever rich, and I think it very likely one day or another I may live there entirely. I write with a bad headache, but I write speedily to remonstrate, in the strongest manner, against your pamphlet. I am sure John Murray will agree with me: my kindest regards to him; he is an admirable man. Adieu!

SYDNEY SMITH.

12.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

February, 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

I thought you had entirely forgotten me, and was pleasing myself with the notion that you were rising in the world, that your income was tripling and quadrupling in value, and that you were going through the customary and concomitant process of shedding your old friends and the companions of your obscurity,—when, behold! your letter arrived, diminished your income, blunted your fame, and restored your character.

As for me, I am plagued to death with lectures, sermons, etc.; and am afraid I have rather overloaded myself. I got through my first course I think creditably; whether any better than creditably, others know better than myself. I have still ten to read, have written two upon wit and humour, and am proceeding to write three upon taste. What the subject of the others will be I know not. I wish I had your sanity and fertility at my elbow, to resort to in cases of dulness and difficulty.

I am extremely glad, however, upon the whole, that I have engaged in the thing, and think that it will do me good, and *hereafter* amuse me, when I have more leisure.

I have not seen much of your friend Bell,* but mean to see more of him. He is modest, amiable, and full of zeal and enterprise in his profession. I could not have conceived that anything could be so perfect and beautiful as his wax models. I saw one today, which was quite the Apollo Belvidere of morbid anatomy.

Horner is a very happy man; his worth and talents

* The late Sir Charles Bell.

are acknowledged by the world at a more early period than those of any independent and upright man I ever remember. He verifies an observation I have often made, that the world do not dislike originality, liberality, and independence so much as the *insulting arrogance* with which they are almost always accompanied. Now, Horner pleases the best judges, and does not offend the worst.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey!—is the prayer of your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

13.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Doughty-street, April, 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

I should be very much obliged to you to transmit the enclosed testimonials to St. Andrew's, to pay for the degree, to send me word how much you have paid for it, and I will repay you immediately. If there be any form neglected, then send us information how to proceed. The degree itself may be sent to me also, by the mail or post, according to its size. Pray do not neglect this affair, as the interests of a poor and respectable man depend upon it.

My lectures are just now at such an absurd pitch of celebrity, that I must lose a good deal of reputation before the public settles into a just equilibrium respecting them. I am most heartily ashamed of my own fame, because I am conscious I do not deserve it, and that the moment men of sense are provoked by the clamour to look into my claims, it will be at an end.

SYDNEY SMITH.

14.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Doughty-street, 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

Many thanks to you for your goodness. My little boy is, thank God, recovered. I sat up with him for two nights, expecting every moment would be his last. My great effort was to keep up Mrs. Sydney's spirits, in which I succeeded tolerably well. I will not exercise my profession of preaching commonplaces to you; I acknowledge your loss was a heavy calamity, for I can measure what you felt by what I felt for you.

You have raised up to yourself here, *individually*, a very high and solid reputation by your writings in the Edinburgh Review. You are said to be the ablest man in Scotland; and other dainty phrases are used about you, which show the effect you have produced. Mackintosh, ever anxious to bring men of merit into notice, is the loudest of your panegyrists, and the warmest of your admirers. I have now had an opportunity of appreciating the manner in which the Review is felt, and I do assure you it has acquired a most brilliant and extensive reputation.

Follow it up, by all means. On the first of every month, Horner and I will meet together, and order books for Edinburgh: this we can do from the monthly lists. In addition, we will scan the French booksellers' shops, and send you anything valuable, excepting a certain portion that we will reserve for ourselves. We will, in this division, be just and candid as we can; if you do not think us so, let us know. You will have the lists, and can order for yourselves any books, not before ordered for you; many catalogue articles I will take, to avoid the expense of sending them backwards

and forwards from Edinburgh to London: many I will send. The articles I shall review from No. 6 are 'Iceland,' Goldbering's 'Travels into Africa,' and Ségur upon the 'Influence of Women in Society.' I shall not lose sight of the probability of procuring assistance; some, I am already asking for. You will not need from me more than two sheets, I presume. Pray tell me the names of the writers of this number. Mackintosh says there has been no such book upon Political Economy as Brougham's since the days of Adam Smith.

S. S.

15.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

Many thanks to you for your attention to my diploma. When you send me a statement of expenses, I will give you a draft for the money; by statement, I mean amount.

I conclude my lectures next Saturday. Upon the whole, I think I have done myself some little good by them.

I think your last articles in the Edinburgh Review extremely able, and by no means inferior to what you have done before.

John Allen is come home, in very high favour with Lord and Lady Holland. They say he is, without exception, the best-tempered man that ever lived, very honourable, and of an understanding superior to most people; in short, they do him complete justice. He is very little altered, except that he appears to have some faint notions that all the world are not quite so

honourable and excellent as himself. I have the highest respect for John Allen.

I wrote to Dugald Stewart, to tell him of a report, which prevailed here, that the General Assembly had ordered him to drink a Scotch pint of hemlock, which he had done, discoursing about the gods to Playfair and Darcy!*

Best regards to Tim Thompson. When am I to see you again, and John Murray, and everybody in the North whom I love and respect?

SYDNEY SMITH.

16.] To DR. REEVE†—(Vienna).

8, *Doughty-street, Brunswick-square, October 29th*, 1805.

My dear Sir,

I suggested everything I could to Barnard; told him that you had made three distinct efforts to come home, and had been robbed as many times by armed chaplains of the Austrian army; that Dr. De Roches had been wounded in the right glontean, and you yourself thrown into a smart tertian by your grief and anxiety. The committee will not *bind themselves* to make a new engagement with you, but I have no

* Mrs. Dugald Stewart.

† Dr. Reeve was a pupil of Mr. Martineau, an eminent surgeon at Norwich. He afterwards studied medicine at Edinburgh, where he enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Sydney Smith, Mr. Horner, and other founders of the Edinburgh Review, and was among the early contributors to that journal. At the time this letter was written, he was travelling on the Continent with his friend Dr. De Roches, of Geneva, who had also studied at Edinburgh. Dr. Reeve afterwards married the elder daughter of Mr. John Taylor, of Norwich, and settled at that place. He died in the year 1814.—ED.

doubt you will secure your situation upon your return.

I will, in the meantime, do all I can to get you inserted in the list for spring, 1807, which comes out, I think, about May 1806.

I would advise you not to fling away this occasion, which is no despicable one, for a physician; because he must be a very clumsy gentleman if, in lecturing upon the moral and physical nature of man, he cannot take an opportunity of saying, that he lives at No. 6, Chancery-lane, and that few people are equal to him in the cure of fevers. As to the improvement you get, my dear doctor, in travelling abroad, *credat Judæus!* You have seen a skull of a singular conformation at Dr. Baumgarten's, and seen a toe in Suabia, which astonished you; but what, in the name of Dr. Gregory, can you see in Germany of a therapeutic nature which you cannot see better in Scotland or here? You will do yourself more real good by superintending one woman of quality in London, than by drinking tea with all the German professors that ever existed.

All these events in Germany have not astonished me: I allowed Buonaparte twenty-eight days to knock both armies *clunes super caput* (as the vulgar have it), to conclude peace, make a speech to the Senate, and illuminate Paris. He is as rapid and as terrible as the lightning of God; would he were as transient! Ah! my dear doctor, you are of a profession which will endure for ever; no revolutions will put an end to Synochus and Synoche; but what will become of the spoils *we* gather from the earth? those cocks of ripe farina, on which the holy bough is placed—the

tithes! Adieu—God bless you! I will watch over your interests, and, if anything occur, write to you again.

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S. I think, upon reflection, you had better write a line to the Committee, stating the impossibility of your coming home, though you strongly wish, and begging to be put on the list for spring, 1807. Add also that you will employ the intervening time in collecting materials for your lectures. Send it to me; never mind postage.

17.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

18, *Orchard-street, London*, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

I thank you for your kind and friendly letter, which gave me great pleasure. I am exempted at present from residence, as preacher to the Foundling Hospital; had it been otherwise, I could, I think, have lived very happily in the country, in armigeral, priestly, and swine-feeding society. I have given up the Royal Institution. My wife and children are well, and the world at present goes prosperously with me. I shall pass part of next summer at my living, and in all probability come over to Edinburgh. Sharp, Boddington, Philips, and Horner come into Parliament this session. I say nothing of foreign politics in the present state of the world: we live and hope only from quarter-day to quarter-day. I shall probably remain nearly in the state I am now in till next midsummer. I have not a thought beyond: perhaps it is rash to think so far. I have seen Stuart once; he seems tor-

mented to death with friends, but he talked out about Paris very fairly and pleasantly.

Tell Murray that I was much struck with the politeness of Miss Markham the day after he went. In carving a partridge, I splashed her with gravy from head to foot; and though I saw three distinct brown rills of animal juice trickling down her cheek, she had the complaisance to swear that not a drop had reached her! Such circumstances are the triumphs of civilized life.

I shall be truly happy to see you again. What do you mean by saying we shall meet soon? Have you any immediate thoughts of coming to London? Remember me kindly to Murray, Thomson, Alison, Playfair, etc. I am very glad you see so much of these latter personages. Tell Playfair I have presented the four copies of his book to four of the most beautiful women of my acquaintance, with his particular compliments and regards.

SYDNEY SMITH.

18.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard-street, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

You will be surprised, after my last letter, to hear from me so soon again, and that my assistance in the next number must be left doubtful. Some circumstances have occurred, of consequence only to myself, which will entirely occupy my time, and render it impossible to do the articles well, if I can do them at all. I have to apologize to you for this apparent mutability, but I am quite certain you would justify me if you knew my reasons.

The present Administration have put nobody into Parliament: they are too strong to want clever young men.

I must be candid with you, my dear Jeffrey, and tell you that I do not like your article on the Scotch Courts; and with me think many persons whose opinions I am sure you would respect. I subscribe to none of your reasonings, hardly, about juries; and the manner in which you have done it is far from happy. You have made, too, some egregious mistakes about English law, pointed out to me by one of the first lawyers in the King's Bench. I like to tell you these things, because you never do so well as when you are humbled and frightened, and if you could be alarmed into the semblance of modesty, you would charm everybody; but remember my joke against you about the moon;—"D—n the solar system! bad light—planets too distant—pestered with comets—feeble contrivance;—could make a better with great ease."

I sincerely hope you will be up here in the spring. It is long since we met, and I want to talk over old and new times with you. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

19.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard-street, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

I saw, of course, a good deal of Timotheus while he was here. After breathing for a year the free air of London, his caution struck me as rather ludicrous; but I liked him very much: he is a very honest, good-natured, sensible man.

I have just blinked at the Review, and that is all. Constable has omitted to send quarterly tributes of reviews to Horner and to me;—to me, the original proposer of the Review, and to Horner, the frumentarious philosopher! If he is ever again guilty of a similar omission, he shall be pulled down from his present eminence.

The other day I went to the Panorama. There was near me a party consisting of one old and three young women; and what do you think was the subject of their conversation?—which was the handsomest, John or William Murray! I am not joking; it is really true, upon my honour. There seemed to be a decided majority in favour of John, on account of his fairness. William Murray will not believe it.

I don't know whether you agree with me about the present language and divisions of intellectual philosophy. They appear to me to be in a most barbarous state, and to be found nowhere in a state of higher confusion and puzzle than in the 'Intellectual Powers' of Dr. Reid. I have got a little insight into metaphysics by these lectures of mine; and though I am not learned enough to cope with you, I think I could understand you, and make myself understood by you. Do you agree with Stewart in his doctrine of sleep?—in his belief of the existence of conceptions?—in his divisions between sensation and perception?—in the propriety of the language he holds about ideas gained by the senses? I do not. Tell me if you do; yes or no, *simpliciter*.

SYDNEY SMITH.

20.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

18, *Orchard-street, Dec.* 21*st*, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

It gives me great pleasure to think of visiting Scotland in the summer; but the drawback will be, to leave my wife and children, which I assure you I am loath to do for a single day.

Brougham is just returned from Portugal. It is rumoured that he was laid hold of by the Inquisition, and singed with wax-tapers, on account of the Edinburgh Review. They were at first about to use flambeaux, conceiving him to be you; but, upon recurring to the notes they have made of your height, an error was discovered of two feet, and the lesser fires only administered!

If I should be inclined to write anything for the Edinburgh Review this time, what books remain vacant? Have the goodness to send me a list, or, if that be difficult, send me a list of what books are appropriated; and I will immediately determine upon some or none, and inform you of my determination. By what period must my task be completed, if I undertake it?

I am resolved to write some book, but I do not know what book. If I fail, I shall soon forget the ridicule; if I succeed, I shall never forget the praise. The pleasure of occupation I am sure of, and I hardly think my failure can be very complete.

I have totally forgotten the Prussian monarchy since the third day after its destruction; nor will I think of destruction till the battlements of Troy are falling round my head, and I see Neptune stirring up its

foundations with his trident! Why should we be ravished and ruined daily?

SYDNEY SMITH.

21.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

No date: supposed 1807.

Dear Jeffrey,

Concerning the Review, I think the whole number exceedingly good. Playfair's article is very much liked, and does not owe its success to its attack upon a bishop against whom everybody sympathizes, but has genuine merit. Were I to criticize it at all, I should say it was rather Doric. Brougham's is most able, and the censure amply merited. Locke's 'Tennant' I should suspect to be very green and crude, though I have not yet read much of it. These are all the articles of which I have heard any opinion, or which I have noticed. There are several Scotticisms in Playfair's review. I like —— very much, without caring about meeting him. I think his subjects of charcoal and chalk are very inferior ones, and that there is a good deal of bad taste in him, though that is in some degree atoned for by his propensity to the good and the liberal. I have no alloy to mingle in my approbation of Playfair. Brown is an impracticable, excellent creature. Of —— I can really form no tolerable opinion: contrasting *him* with his high character; his ordinary nullity, with his occasional specimens of extraordinary penetration, fine taste, and comprehensive observation, I am puzzled to silence: he is a man whom I cannot make out. Brougham impresses me more and more with a notion of his ta-

lents and acquisitions. No change has happened to me in my prospects. I sincerely hope your journey to the country will quite re-establish Mrs. Jeffrey's health; and I beg you will let me know in your next letter. There is nothing I long for so much as to pay you a visit in the North: the first acquisition of riches with which I am visited shall be consecrated to that object.

SYDNEY SMITH.

22.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London, 1807.

My dear Jeffrey,

I may perhaps furnish you with a sheet this time. Nothing but illness or occupation will prevent me. It is not probable that these causes of interruption will occur, but I beg to provide against them in case they do. I wish you could give Constable a lecture respecting his inattention to the contributors to the Review. Everybody gets the Review before me by land-carriage, and I am defrauded with a sea Review: this is not right.

You take politics to heart more than any man I know; I do not mean questions of party, but questions of national existence. I wish we lived in the same place, for many reasons; but, among others, that we might plan some publication which would not be useless. These things are not to be despised, though they are not equal in importance to questions respecting the existence of another world, etc.

I was much amused by hearing —— was at Lord Lauderdale's. I suppose a mutual treaty of peace was

first signed, in which both surrendered part of their doctrines; or some mutual friend, skilled in political economy, stepped in,—probably Horner. Brougham, I am sorry to hear, does not come into Parliament by this vacancy, occasioned by Lord Howick's elevation to the peerage. His loss will be grievous to the Whigs.

Pray have the goodness to tell me, in your next letter, whether there is a man in Edinburgh whom you can recommend as an instructor of youth, in whose house a young Englishman could be safely deposited, without peril of marrying a Scotch girl with a fortune of 1*s.* 6*d.* sterling.

I humbly beseech you and earnestly exhort you to come to town this spring. You should revisit the Metropolis more frequently than you do, on many accounts.

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I think you have spoilt many of my jokes; but this, I suppose, every writer thinks, whose works you alter; and I am unfortunately, as you know, the vainest, and most irritable of human beings.

23.] To LADY HOLLAND.

July 14th, 1807.

My dear Lady Holland,

Mr. Allen has mentioned to me the letters of a Mr. Plymley, which I have obtained from the adjacent market-town, and read with some entertainment. My conjecture lies between three persons—Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir Arthur Pigott, or Mr. Horner, for the name is evidently fictitious. I shall be very happy to hear your conjectures on this subject on Saturday,

when I hope you will let me dine with you at Holland House, but I must sleep in town that night. I shall come to Holland House, unless I hear to the contrary, and will then answer Lord Holland's letter.

S. S.

24.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Orchard-street, Nov. 18th, 1807.

My dear Jeffrey,

If you have any pleasure in the gratification of your vanity, you may enjoy such pleasure as much as you please. You have no idea how high your works stand here, and what a reputation they have given to you. Your notions of the English Constitution delight the Tories beyond all belief; and you have now nearly atoned for D——'s opinions. The Whigs like that part of your review which attacks, or rather destroys, Cobbett; but shake their heads at your general political doctrine.

I am waiting to see who is to be my new master in York.* I care very little whether he make me reside or not, and shall take to grazing as quietly as Nebuchadnezzar!

Sydney Smith.

25.] To Lady Holland.

Bath, December 9th, 1807.

War, my dear Lady Holland, is natural to women, as well as men,—at least with their own sex!

A dreadful controversy has broken out in Bath,

* The Archbishop, Dr. Markham, was just dead. Dr. Vernon, Bishop of Carlisle, succeeded.

whether tea is most effectually sweetened by lump or pounded sugar; and the worst passions of the human mind are called into action by the pulverists and the lumpists. I have been pressed by ladies on both sides to speak in favour of their respective theories, at the Royal Institution, which I have promised to do.

In the meantime, my mind is agitated by the nicely-balanced force of opposite arguments, and I regret that peaceable bigotry which I enjoy in the Metropolis, by living with men who are entirely agreed upon the greater part of the subjects which come under discussion. I shall regain my own tranquillity on Saturday night, and bid adieu to a controversy which is more remarkable for the ingenious reasoning by which it is upheld, than for the important results to which it leads.

The general idea here is, that we are upon the eve of reaping the good effects of the vigorous system of administration; and that the French, driven to the borders of insanity by the want of coffee, will rise and establish a family more favourable to the original mode of breakfasting. I have ventured to express doubts, but am immediately silenced as an Edinburgh Reviewer.

I found "the preceding phenomenon" well; or, to speak more classically, everything about him referable to the sense of seeing excited the same ideas as before; the same with the co-effect, or sister. Allen would say, the co-sequence, but he is over rigid: in loose, familiar writing we may say, the co-effect; co-sequence looks (as it seems to me) stiff and affected.

SYDNEY SMITH.

26.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

8, *Doughty-street, Brunswick-square.*

My dear Lady Holland,

I told the little poet,* after the proper softenings of wine, dinner, flattery, repeating his verses, etc. etc., that a friend of mine wished to lend him some money, and I begged him to take it. The poet said that he had a very sacred and serious notion of the duties of independence, that he thought he had no right to be burdensome to others from the mere apprehensions of evil, and that he was in no immediate want. If it was necessary, he would ask me hereafter for the money without scruple; and that the knowing he *had* such resources in reserve, was a great comfort to him. This was very sensible and very honourable to him, nor had he the slightest feeling of affront on the subject, but, on the contrary, of great gratitude to his benefactor, whose name I did not mention, as the money was not received; I therefore cancel your draft, and will call upon you, if he calls upon me. This, I presume, meets your approbation. I had a great deal of conversation with him, and he is a much more sensible man than I had any idea of. I have received this morning a very kind letter from Sir Francis Baring, almost amounting to a promise that I am to be a professor in his new Institution.

I cannot conclude my letter without telling you, that you are a very good lady for what you have done; and that, for it, I give you my hearty benediction. Respectfully and sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

* The late Thomas Campbell, Esq.

P.S. I have a project for Campbell's publishing this new volume of poems by subscription; they are already far advanced.

27.] To Lady Holland.

York.

You can conceive nothing like the tumult of this city; it was as riotous as London in the middle of the night. I have seen two drunken people and one battle. The clergy and ladies are leaving the town. I am most happy to tell you that Lord Milton will, in all probability, get his election. I came here last night, and voted today.

I forgot to send you the Chancellor's scrap. My request to him, through my friend Sir William Scott, was, if any patronee of his preferred the North to the South, that I might be allowed to gratify so singular a wish by exchanging with him.

S. S.

28.] *Notes for Lord Holland.*

The Curates Bill gives such power to the Bishops, that, if to that be added the power they already possess by the Bill of Residence, no clergyman who values his domestic comfort will ever think of differing from his bishop's opinions in any publication, religious, political, or historical; thus a great mass of educated men are placed in utter subservience to those who are in utter subservience to the Crown.

The true remedy is, by taking care that proper peo-

ple are appointed to curacies. *E. g.* let the bishops, in livings above a certain value, have the power of rejecting any curate who has not taken a degree at some English University. The difficulty of procuring such curates would fix the price. The condition exacted would be the best guarantee that the parish was well taken care of. It is impossible by any law to prevent me from agreeing privately with my curate, when I appoint him, that (let the Bishop order what he will) he shall only accept a certain sum.

The law *endeavours* to prevent this, by saying such bargains shall not be binding; *i. e.* it aims to effect its object by making one man to act dishonourably towards another, when it is for the interest of the Church that they should both be on the best terms; and this very scoundrel who has thus broken his faith is the species of curate which Mr. Perceval contends is to be so honourable. How is his condition bettered by the Bill? If he be dishonourable, will he be a useful man to his parish?

IMPORTANT TOPICS.

That it comes from a school that you do not like should tamper with the Church of England; that whenever the revenues of the Church are seized upon, it will be under the very same plea upon which this Bill is founded;—*i. e.* that they belong to the State, and can be appropriated to any person or purpose which the State may think proper; and that the step is short from ecclesiastical to lay tithes.

I forgot to say, that it cannot be contended that this increase of salary is meant to act as a fine upon the non-resident rector; because you first pass a law

stating that such and such causes of absence are legal, and then you punish a man for doing what the law permits.

This law supposes that the rector is only desirous of putting in the cheapest curate he can get; whereas non-resident rectors are *commonly* very desirous of putting in people of respectability.

It is folly to speak of bettering the condition of the curate, as if it were a permanent state: it is merely a transitory state. The grub puts up with anything, because it means to be an aurelia. A footman is better than a curate, if to *be* a curate were the only object of any man; but a man says, "I shall succeed to some preferment hereafter. *That* is my reward; but, in the meantime, I shall take what I can get."

Lastly, is it worth while for the Bishop of London to make alterations in the Church when the world has only sixty years to remain,—indeed, now only fifty-nine and a half?

29.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Orchard-street, Feb. 20th, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

Your Catholic article of the last Review is, I perceive, printed separately. I am very glad of it: it is excellent, and universally allowed to be so. I envy you your sense, your style, and the good temper with which you attack prejudices that drive me almost to the limits of insanity. The Duke of ——'s agent in Ireland is an Orangeman; and in spite of all the remonstrances of the Duke, who is too indolent or too good-natured to turn him off, he has acted like an

Orangeman. What the Duke could not effect, you have done by your review; and the man is now entirely converted to the interests of the Catholics, merely by what you have written upon the subject. This fact Lord Ponsonby told me yesterday.

I have read no article in this number but Dugald Stewart's 'Sallust,' which is not particularly well done. When I have read the Review I will tell you what I think, and what wiser men than I think, of each article.

Of our friend Horner I do not see much. He has four distinct occupations, each of which may very fairly occupy the life of a man not deficient in activity: the Carnatic Commission, the Chancery Bar, Parliament, and a very numerous and select acquaintance. He has, as you perceive by the papers, spoken often and well, without however having as yet done anything decided.

I regret sincerely that so many years have elapsed since we met. I hope, if you possibly can, you will contrive to come to town this spring: we will keep open house for you; you shall not be molested with large parties. You have earned a very high reputation here, and you may eat it out in turbot, at great people's houses, if you please; though I well know you would prefer the quiet society of your old friends.

Pray tell me whom you see most of, what you do with yourself, what spirits you are in, and every particular about yourself.

I always think of Edinburgh with the greatest pleasure, and always resolve to pay it a visit every Sunday; but want of time and of money have hitherto repressed my noble rage. SYDNEY SMITH.

30.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

March 13th, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have now read the whole of the Review. I like the 'Mécanique Céleste;' Davy; Bowles; Hours of Idleness, too severe; Sallust, not good; Spence, profound but obscure; Elizabeth, shocking and detestable; Carnatic, said to be very good.

The Review, I understand, sold in four days. Upon the whole, the number is not a good one; and I will trouble you to write something in every number, or we shall be accused of dullness and insignificance.

Sydney Smith.

31.] To Dr. Reeve—(Norwich).

Bishop's Lydiard, Taunton, August 11, 1808.

My dear Sir,

I thank you very kindly for your invitation, and for your recollection of me. I sincerely wish that the little time I can get away from London would admit of my making such a visit: nothing would give me greater pleasure. You mention many inducements: I can want no other than the pleasure of paying my respects to you and to Mrs. Opie.

The Bishop* is incomparable. He should *touch* for bigotry and absurdity! He is a kind of man who would do his duty in all situations at every hazard: in Spain he would have headed his diocese against the French; at Marseilles he would have struggled against the plague; in Flanders he would have been

* Bishop Bathurst.

a Fénelon. He does honour to the times in which he lives, and more good to Christianity than all the sermons of his brethren would do, if they were to live a thousand years. As you will probably be his physician when he is a very old man, bolster him up with nourishing meats, my dear doctor, invigorate him with medicated possets. Search for life in drugs and herbs, and keep him as a comely spectacle to the rising priesthood. You have a great charge!

SYDNEY SMITH.

32.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Howick, Sept. 9th, 1808.

Dear Lady Holland,

I take the liberty to send you two brace of grouse, —curious, because killed by a Scotch metaphysician; in other and better language, they are mere ideas, shot by other ideas, out of a pure intellectual notion, called a gun.

I found a great number of philosophers in Edinburgh, in a high state of obscurity and metaphysics.

Dugald Stewart is extremely alarmed by the repeated assurances I made that he was the author of 'Plymley's Letters,'—or generally considered so to be.

I have been staying here two days on my return, and two days on my journey to Edinburgh. An excellent man, Lord Grey, and pleasant to be seen in the bosom of his family. I approve very highly also of his lady.

Ever most affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

33.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

October 8th, 1808.

My dear Lady Holland,

No sooner was your back turned than I took advantage of your absence to give up Harefield, and settle in Yorkshire. I never liked the Harefield scheme. Bad society, no land, no house, no salary, dear as London, neither in London nor out of it, not accessible to a native, not interesting to a stranger. But the fear of you before my eyes prevented me from saying so.

My lot is now fixed and my heritage fixed,—most probably. But you may choose to make me a bishop, and if you do, I think I shall never do you discredit; for I believe it is out of the power of lawn and velvet, and the crisp hair of dead men fashioned into a wig, to make me a dishonest man; but if you do not, I am perfectly content, and shall be ever grateful to the last hour of my life to you and to Lord Holland.

—— is not returned: the Mufti in high leg about the Spaniards: Horner so extremely serious about the human race, that I am forced to compose my face half a street off before I meet him.

Our next King of Clubs is on Saturday, where you and your expedition will be talked over at some length. I presume you have received a thundering letter from Lord Grey.

You will see in the next Edinburgh Review two articles of mine,—one on the Catholics, the other on the Curates Bill,—neither of which, I think, you will read.

I feel sometimes melancholy at the idea of quitting

London,—"the warm precincts of the cheerful day;" but it is the will of God, and I am sure I shall gain by it wealth, knowledge, and happiness.

SYDNEY SMITH.

34.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have heard nothing yet of the doubts and scruples of the Archbishop, and hope they may be dying away.

I have let my house at Thames Ditton very well, and sold the gentleman my wine and poultry. I attribute my success in these matters to having read half a volume of Adam Smith early in the summer, and to hints that have dropped from Horner, in his playful moods, upon the subject of sale and barter.

There is a very snug little dinner today at Brompton, of Abercrombie, Whishaw, Bigg, and a few select valuables. It is not known for certain what they will talk about, but conjectured that it will go hard with the Spanish patriots in their conversation. By the bye, a person with a feather and a green jacket, clearly a foreigner, rode express up Pall Mall yesterday evening; and a post-chaise and four passed over Westminster Bridge about twelve o'clock today. I mention this for our friend Brougham; he must make of it what he can. Slight appearances are to be looked to.

Excuse my nonsense; you are pretty well accustomed to it by this time.

SYDNEY SMITH.

35.] To John Allen, Esq.

Dear Allen,

I am glad to find that I am mistaken respecting the King of Clubs. Of Lord Holland or you I never had any doubt, nor of Romilly, but of all the others I had; that is, I thought they were of opinion that the benefit of Lords Grenville, Grey, etc., should not be lost to the country for that single question.

I have sent my sermon to Lord Grenville.

It is not that the politics of the day are considered unsuitable to the Edinburgh Review, but the *personalities* of the day are objected to. This seems to have influenced Jeffrey. I thought it right, once for all, to make a profession of my faith; and by that, to exempt myself ever after from the necessity of noticing such attacks as have been made upon me in the Quarterly Review. I meant to do it bluntly and shortly; if I have done it with levity, I am a clumsy and an unlucky fellow.

I by no means give up my opinions respecting the Catholic bishops. I have added something to that note, in order to explain it; but if the electors, warned of the incivism of their candidate, still procure his election, and put him in a situation where he is dependent on the will, and subject to the influence, of a foreign power, the Government has a right, upon every principle of self-preservation, to act with that man as I propose. You may object to the objectors, but nobody else can be entrusted with such a power.

My brethren, who tremble at my boldness, should be more attentive to what I *really* said, which concerns not the truth or falsehood of the passage, but

the *expediency* or *inexpediency* of allowing it to be an interpolation.

Brougham has been extremely friendly to me about my sermon.

SYDNEY SMITH.

36.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

October 30, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

I hear with great sorrow from Elmsley, that a very anti-Christian article has crept into the last number of the Edinburgh Review, inaccurate in point of history, and dull in point of execution. I need no other proof that the Review was left in other hands than yours, because you must be thoroughly aware that the rumour of infidelity decides not only the reputation, but the existence of the Review. I am extremely sorry, too, on my own account; because those who *wish* it to have been written by me, will say it *was* so.

I hear there has been a meeting between you and your patient Southey, and that he was tolerably civil to his chirurgeon.

Do not disappoint us of your company in the spring, in this great city, and bring with you Timotheus, accustomed to midnight carousal and soul-inspiring alcohol. Brown is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, he changeth not; a greater proneness to mutability would however have been a much better thing for them both; for I have no doubt but that the laws often have been, and that the Doctor often *is*, hugely mistaken.

Magnitude to you, my dear Jeffrey, must be such

an intoxicating idea, that I have no doubt you would rather be gigantic in your errors, than immense in no respect whatsoever; however, comfort yourself that your good qualities are far beyond the common size; for which reason, originally, but *now* from long habit, I am your affectionate friend,

S. SMITH.

37.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard-street, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have as yet read very few articles in the Edinburgh Review, having lent it to a sick countess, who only wished to read it, because a few copies only had arrived in London.

I like very much the review of Davy, think the review of Espriella much too severe, and am extremely vexed by the review of Hoyle's Exodus. The levities it contains will, I am sure, give very great offence; and they are ponderous and vulgar, as well as indiscreet. Such sort of things destroy *all* the good effect which the liberality and knowledge of the Edinburgh Review are calculated to produce, and give to fools as great a power over you as you have over them. Besides the general regret I feel from errors of this nature, I cannot help feeling that they press harder upon *me* than upon anybody; by giving to the Review a character which makes it perilous to a clergyman, in particular, to be concerned in it. I am sure you will excuse me for expressing my feelings upon this subject, and I know that you have friendship enough for me, to be more upon your guard in future against a style of

writing which is not only mischievous to me in particular, but mischievous to the whole undertaking; and without the slightest compensation of present amusement. The author I know; and when he told me the article upon which he had been employed, I foresaw the manner in which he would treat it. Upon this subject Brougham entirely agrees with me.

I am glad you like the Methodists. Of the Scotch market you are a better judge than I am, but you may depend upon it, it will give great satisfaction here; I mean, of course, the *nature* of the attack, not the *manner* in which it is executed. All attacks upon the Methodists are very popular with steady men of very moderate understanding; the description of men among whom the bitterest enemies of the Edinburgh Review are to be found.

I do not understand what you mean by "levity of quotations." I attack these men because they have foolish notions of religion. The more absurd the passage, the more necessary it should be displayed—the more urgent the reason for making the attack at all.

I am thinking of writing a sheet this time about the missions to India and elsewhere; in short, a sort of *exposé* of the present state of Protestant missions. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

38.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

York, Nov. 20th, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

It is a very long time since I answered your letter, but I have been choked by the cares of the world. I

came down here for a couple of days, to look at two places which were to be let, and have been detained here in pursuit of them for ten or twelve days. The place I am aiming at is one mile and a half from York; a convenient house and garden, with twelve acres of land. This will do for me very well while I am building at Foston, where I shall, in all human probability, spend the rest of my days. I am by no means grieved at quitting London; sorry to lose the society of my friends, but wishing for more quiet, more leisure, less expense, and more space for my children. I am extremely pleased with what I have seen of York.

About the University of Oxford, I doubt; but you shall have it, if I can possibly find time for it. I am publishing fifty sermons at present, which take up some considerable share of my attention: much more, I fear, than they will of any other person.

I am very glad that the chances of life have brought us two hundred miles nearer together. It is really a fortunate circumstance, that, in quitting London, where I have pushed so many roots, I should be brought again within the reach of the bed from which I was transplanted.

I return to town next Friday, and leave it for good on Lady-day. Mrs. Sydney is delighted with her rustication. She has suffered all the evils of London, and enjoyed none of its goods.

Yours, dear Jeffrey, ever most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

39.] To THE EARL GREY.

December 15*th*, 1808.

Dear Lord Grey,

I had a letter from Allen, and another from Lady Holland, dated Corunna, 1st of December. They talk of going to Lisbon or Cadiz by sea, and I rather think they will do so. Allen complains of the great remissness of the Junta, and it is now the fashion to say here, that there is really no enthusiasm; and that there never have been more, at any time, than seventy thousand Spanish troops on foot.

Many people are now quite certain Buonaparte is an instrument, etc. It turns out, however, that the instrument has been baking biscuit very diligently at Bayonne for three months past, and therefore does not disdain the assistance of human means. We (who probably are not instruments) act as if we were. We send horses that cannot draw, commissaries who cannot feed an army, generals who cannot command one. We take our enemy out of a place where he can do us no harm, and land him safely in the very spot where he can do us the greatest mischief. We are quite convinced that Providence has resolved upon our destruction, because Lord Mulgrave and Lord Castlereagh have neither sense nor activity enough to secure our safety.

I beg my best respects to Lady Grey, and remain, my dear Lord Grey,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

SYDNEY SMITH.

40.] To the Earl Grey.

18, *Orchard-street, Portman-square, December* 21*st*, 1808.

Dear Lord Grey,

Dr. Vaughan's brother is just come over, who says the Spaniards are quite sure of succeeding, and that it is impossible to conquer them. I mean to have him examined next week by Whishaw, Brougham, and other Whigs.

Brougham and I are going next week to stay a day or two with a Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, where we are to meet your friend Mrs. Wilmot, whom I am very curious to see.

I am just publishing fifty discourses, which I shall take the liberty to send to Lady Grey; conceiving that in so remote a part of England, theology is not to be had so pure as here.

Sydney Smith.

41.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Orchard-street, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

When you talk of the clamours of Edinburgh, I will not remind you of a tempest in a pot, for that would be to do injustice to the metropolis of the north; but a hurricane in a horse-pond is a simile useful for conveying my meaning, and not unjust to the venerable city of Edinburgh. ——'s review is imprudent in the expressions—more than wrong in its doctrines; but you will not die of it this time, and are, I believe, more frightened than hurt. As for me, I am very busy, and question much whether I shall be able to

contribute; if I do, it will most probably be the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

It is perfectly fair that any other set of men should set up a Review, and, in my opinion, very immaterial.

In all probability it is all over with Spain, and if so, probably there is an end of Europe; the rest will be a downhill struggle: I cannot help it, and so will be merry to the last. Allen writes word that the Junta has been very remiss, and Moore, that there is no enthusiasm at all; in addition, it is now said that there never have been more than seventy thousand men in arms.

Yours, my dear Jeffrey, in great haste, and very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

42.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

London, December, 1808.

Why, dear Lady Holland, do you not come home? It has been all over this month. Except in the Holland family there has not been a man of sense for some weeks who has thought otherwise. Are you fond of funerals? Do you love to follow a nation to its grave? What else can you see or do by remaining abroad? Linendrapers and shoemakers might perhaps save Spain,—in the hands of dukes and bishops it is infallibly gone.

Our friend —— has been bolting out of the course again in the Edinburgh Review. It is extremely difficult to keep him right. He should always have two tame elephants, Abercrombie and Whishaw, who might

beat him with their trunks, when he behaved in an unwhiglike manner.

I have bought a book about drilling beans, and a greyhound puppy for the Malton meeting. It is thought I shall be an eminent rural character. Do not listen to anything that is written to you about a change of administration. There may be a change from one Tory to another, but there is not the slightest chance for the Whigs.

The very worst possible accounts from Ireland. I shall be astonished if they do not begin to make some stir. They will not rebel just now, but they will threaten.

We are expecting every day the destruction of the English army by Buonaparte. You may hear that Lord Melville is in opposition upon the question of Spain, and that he entirely agrees with Lord Grenville upon that point. This is not understood.

I have assisted at a great many dinners during this Christmas, and have been staying with Sheridan at his house in the country.

Kindest regards to Lord Holland and Allen.

SYDNEY SMITH.

43.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 10th, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

Many thanks for two fine Gallicia hams; but as for boiling them in *wine*, I am not as yet high enough in the Church for that; so they must do the best they can in water.

You have no idea of the consternation which

Brougham's attack upon the titled orders has produced: the Review not only discontinued by many, but returned to the bookseller from the very first volume: the library shelves fumigated, etc.!

The new Review of Ellis and Canning is advertised, and begins next month.

We have admitted a Mr. Baring, importer and writer, into the King of Clubs, upon the express condition that he lends £50 to any member of the Club when applied to. I proposed the amendment to his introduction, which was agreed to without a dissenting voice.

You know Mr. Luttrell is prisoner in Fez. Mufti has been ill, but the rumour of a Tory detected in a job has restored him. Horner is ill. He was desired to read amusing books: upon searching his library it appeared he had no amusing books,—the nearest of any work of that description being *The Indian Trader's Complete Guide!*

I cannot tell you how much I miss you and Lord Holland; for besides the pleasure I have in your company, I have contracted a real regard and affection for you,—wish you to get on prosperously and wisely,—want other people to like you, and should be afflicted if any real harm happened to you and yours.

SYDNEY SMITH.

44.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard-street, Feb. 20th, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

Nothing can be better written than Burns. The Bishop's Spanish America opens badly. We shall talk

over this subject much better than we can write upon it.

I by no means say I will not go on with the Edinburgh Review,—by no means say that I will not contribute more copiously, and articles of better stamp, than I yet have done; but whether I will do so or not, will depend upon the result of our conference. Meet we must, as I shall be either where you are coming to, or where you will pass through; in which of these two places, I do not know. My first object is to sell my house: if I do it before Lady-day, I will quit London at that period. It is very improbable however that I shall do so now; and I guess that I shall stay in London till the birthday.

I beg you very seriously to take a little pains with your handwriting: if you will be resolute about it for a month, you will improve immensely: at present your writing is, literally speaking, illegible, and I have not now read one-half of your letter. You talked of reviewing my sermons, now published: I should be obliged to you to lay aside the idea; I know very well my sermons are quite insignificant.

Spain is quite gone. In all probability the English army will be entirely destroyed; and though the struggle will be long, the greater chance surely is that this country will at length be involved in the general ruin.

SYDNEY SMITH.

45.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

February 21st, 1809.

Dear Allen,

I have received from you two or three very kind

letters, for which I thank you; and should have done so before, had I not taken a gay turn lately, and meddled much in the amusements of the town.

I am glad to find that it has pleased Providence to restore you to your reason, and that you are coming home. You may depend upon it, there is no country like this for beauty, and steadiness of climate, as well as for *agrémens* of manners; we are a gay people, living under a serene heaven.

I have had thoughts of writing a political pamphlet, but have adjourned it to another year. From time to time I will make a resolute and lively charge upon the enemy.

The Edinburgh Review for February is come. It is the best, I think, that has appeared for a long time; 'Burns and Warburton,' by Jeffrey; 'Code de la Conscription,' by Walsh, Secretary to the American Ambassador; 'Spanish America,' by a Mr. Mill;* 'Society for the Suppression of Vice,' by a Mr. Sydney Smith; 'West Indies,' by Brougham; 'Steam Engine,' by Playfair; 'Sanscrit Grammar,' by Hamilton; 'Copenhagen,' I believe, ditto. The Quarterly Review is out also; not good, I hear.

The division upon the Orders in Council has surprised everybody, and St. Stephen told Brougham he thought it decisive of their repeal. Three bishops voted with Lord Grenville. Something of this division may be attributed to Mrs. Clarke and the Duke. The conversation of the town for the last fortnight has, as you may suppose, been extremely improper. I

* James Mill, Esq., author of 'British India.' Mr. Mill was intimately acquainted with General Miranda, from whom he doubtless derived much information about Spanish America.—Ed.

have endeavoured as much as I can to give it a little tinge of propriety, but without effect. I think the Duke of York must fall. Believe me, my dear Allen, ever yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

46.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

March 7th, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

I will review, if you please, 'Cœlebs in search of a Wife,' and must beg the favour of an early answer to know if it is at my disposal. I may, perhaps, review something else; but at present I know of nothing. Suggest something to me.

Would you like a review of Fénelon by Mr. Butler,* of Lincoln's Inn? Has a Mr. Blomfield,† of Trinity College, Cambridge, offered you any classical articles? Do you want any? and will you accept any from Dr. Maltby?‡ I think I will review Cockburn's attack upon the Edinburgh Review—why not? What do you think of the Quarterly? I have written twice to John Murray, to beg the favour of him to make some inquiries for me. Will you have the goodness to find out whether my letters have been received, and whether it is inconvenient to him to do what I have asked him to do? Pray answer these queries punctually, and by return, because time presses for the next number.

Mrs. S. begs to be kindly remembered. It will, I am sure, give her great pleasure to see you again. I

* Charles Butler, Esq., the celebrated Real Property Lawyer.

† The present Bishop of London.

‡ The present Bishop of Durham.

am extremely pleased with your articles, and with the Code of Conscription. Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

47.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

June 24th, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

This is the third day since I arrived at the village of Heslington, two hundred miles from London. I missed the hackney-coaches for the first three or four days in York, but after that, prepared myself for the change from the aurelia to the grub state, and dare say I shall become fat, torpid, and motionless with a very good grace.

I have laid down two rules for the country: first, not to smite the partridge; for if I fed the poor, and comforted the sick, and instructed the ignorant, yet I should be nothing worth, if I smote the partridge. If anything ever endangers the Church, it will be the strong propensity to shooting for which the clergy are remarkable. Ten thousand good shots dispersed over the country do more harm to the cause of religion than the arguments of Voltaire and Rousseau. The squire never reads, but is it possible he can believe *that* religion to be genuine whose ministers destroy his game?

I mean to come to town once a year, though of that, I suppose, I shall soon be weary, finding my mind growing weaker and weaker, and my acquaintance gradually falling off. I shall by that time have taken myself again to shy tricks, pull about my watch-chain, and become (as I was before) your abomination.

I am very much obliged to Allen for a long and very sensible letter upon the subject of Spain. After

all, surely the fate of Spain depends upon the fate of Austria. Pray tell the said Don Juan, if he comes northward to visit the authors of his existence, he must make this his resting-place.

Mrs. Sydney is all rural bustle, impatient for the parturition of hens and pigs; I wait patiently, knowing all will come in due season!

SYDNEY SMITH.

48.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope you are quite well, dining with, and giving dinners to, agreeable people; free from all bores, and not displeased with yourself.

I am told Mr. Allen is quite miserable at being defeated by the Archbishop. The trial of skill was remarkable, and it is now quite clear that the atoms have no real power and influence in this world.

My life for the summer is thus disposed of:—I walk up and down my garden, and dine at home, till August; then come my large brother and my little sister; then I go to Manchester, to stay with Philosopher Philips, in September; Horner and Murray come to see me in October; then I shall go and see the Earl Grey; then walk up and down my garden till March.

SYDNEY SMITH.

49.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, Sept. 3rd, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

Are we to see you?—(a difficult thing at all times

to do). Have you settled your dispute with Constable, and in what manner? It is almost superfluous to praise what you write, for you write everything in a superior manner; the rule therefore is, that you are to be highly praised, and the blame is the exception. I admire your temper: it is a difficult thing to refute so many follies, and to rebuke so many villanies, and still to keep yourself within bounds; you have the merit of doing this in an eminent degree, and have exemplified your talent in the review of R——. You speak, I cannot help thinking, rather too carelessly of economy in your 'Parliamentary Reform;' in the present war, threatening a duration of thirty years, everything will turn upon it. I object rather to your tone than to any of your opinions; nor is it only that economy will decide the contest, but that English habits, and prejudices, and practices are not favourable to this humble political virtue. I must be pardoned for suspecting the praise of —— to be overdone, and for pronouncing the review of Lord —— to be neither short nor highly entertaining, nor wholly free from that species of political animadversion which is resorted to in the daily papers. The review of Davy I like very much.

The European world is, I think, here at an end; there is surely no card left to play.

Instead of being unamused by trifles, I am, as I well knew I should be, amused by them a great deal too much; I feel an ungovernable interest about my horses or my pigs, or my plants; I am forced, and always was forced, to task myself up into an interest for any higher objects. When, I ask, shall we see you? I claim, by that interrogation, an answer to a letter of special invitation, written to you from Philips's, and which I cordially renew, and would aggravate, if I could, every

syllable of invitation it contained. Pray lay an injunction upon Tim Thompson, that he in nowise journey to or from the Metropolis without tarrying here.

> Though you are absent, jokes shall never fail;
> I'll kill the fatted calf, and tap the foaming ale;
> We'll settle men and things by rule of thumb,
> And break the lingering night with ancient rum.

SYDNEY SMITH.

50.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

London, Sept. 9th, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hear you laugh at me for being happy in the country, and upon this I have a few words to say. In the first place, whether one lives or dies, I hold, and have always held, to be of infinitely less moment than is generally supposed; but if life is to be, then it is common sense to amuse yourself with the best you can find where you happen to be placed. I am not leading precisely the life I should choose, but that which (all things considered, as well as I could consider them) appeared to me to be the most eligible. I am resolved, therefore, to like it, and to reconcile myself to it; which is more manly than to feign myself above it, and to send up complaints by the post, of being thrown away, and being desolate, and such like trash. I am prepared, therefore, either way. If the chances of life ever enable me to emerge, I will show you that I have not been wholly occupied by small and sordid pursuits. If (as the greater probability is) I am come to the end of my career, I give myself quietly up to horticulture, etc. In short, if it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly; if to fly, I will fly with alacrity; but, as

long as I can possibly avoid it, I will never be unhappy. If, with a pleasant wife, three children, a good house and farm, many books, and many friends, who wish me well, I cannot be happy, I am a very silly, foolish fellow, and what becomes of me is of very little consequence. I have at least this chance of doing well in Yorkshire, that I am heartily tired of London.

I beg pardon for saying so much of myself, but I say it upon this subject once for all.

We had a meeting of *our* Club last Saturday, and a very agreeable one, where your journey to Spain was criticized at much length. Some inclined to this opinion, others to that,—but upon my mentioning that several agreeable dinners at Holland House were irretrievably lost, there was a perfect unanimity of opinion. Sharpe said, "It was a blow."

I met —— in the Strand today. He had the two first sheets of his poem in his pocket, and I believe nothing else, for he told me he had spent all his money, and was rather put to it.

Poor Dumont has lost his sister, and is in great affliction; but he dines with me on Saturday, and I hope to raise up the pleasures Nos. 13 and 24.

No news of any kind, except that this pert and silly answer of Canning's to the citizens has made a considerable impression in the City. Some say that Lord Hawksbury attempted this piece of pertness in imitation of Canning.

I have read the Review, and like the review of Rose exceedingly. How can any one dislike it? Parliamentary Reform exceedingly good, with some objections; Miss Edgeworth over-praised; Strabo, by Payne Knight, excellent; the Bakerian Lectures very good;

Lord Sheffield dull and hot. I am glad you liked Parr.

I am about to open the subject of classical learning in the Review, from which, by some accident or other, it has hitherto abstained. It will give great offence, and therefore be more fit for this journal, the genius of which seems to consist in stroking the animal the contrary way to that which the hair lies.

I dare say it cost you much to part with Charles; but in the present state of the world, it is better to bring up our young ones to war than to peace. I burn gunpowder every day under the nostrils of my little boy, and talk to him often of fighting, to put him out of conceit with civil sciences, and prepare him for the evil times which are coming!

Ever, respectfully and affectionately, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

51.] To LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, Sept. 20th, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

I shall be extremely happy to see ——, and will leave a note for him at the tavern where the mail stops, to say so. Nothing can exceed the dulness of this place: but he has been accustomed to live alone with his grandmother, which, though a highly moral life, is not an amusing one.

There are two Scotch ladies staying here, with whom he will get acquainted, and to whom he may safely make love the ensuing winter: for love, though a very acute disorder in Andalucia, puts on a very chronic

shape in these northern latitudes; for, first, the lover must prove *metapheezically* that he *ought* to succeed; and then, in the fifth or sixth year of courtship (or rather of argument), if the summer is tolerably warm, and oatmeal plenty, the fair one is won.

SYDNEY SMITH.

52.] *From Lord Holland to the Rev. Sydney Smith.*

Dear Sydney,

Pray exert yourself with such friends as your heterodox opinions on Longs and Shorts have left you in Oxford, in favour of Lord Grenville for the Chancellorship. I am sure you would do it *con amore* if you had heard our conversation at Dropmore the other day, and the warm and enthusiastic way in which he spoke of Peter Plymley. I did not fail to remind him that the only author to whom we both thought he could be compared in English, lost a bishopric for his wittiest performance; and I hoped that if we could discover the author, and had ever a bishopric in our gift, we should prove that Whigs were both more grateful and more liberal than Tories. He rallied me upon my affectation of concealing who it was, but added that he hoped Peter would not always live in Yorkshire, where he was persuaded he was at present; for, among other reasons, we felt the want of him just now in the state of the press, and that he heartily wished Abraham would do something to provoke him to take up his pen. But I must write some more letters to Oxford people. Yours ever,

VASSAL HOLLAND.

53.] To the Earl Grey.

October 3rd, 1809.

Dear Lord Grey,

I have been meditating a visit to Howick Castle, and was meditating it before Lord Castlereagh shot Mr. Canning in the thigh, which will make you Secretary of State. If they do not choose to surrender, and attempt to patch up an Administration, then you will remain in the country; and I purpose to stay with you a few days, if you will accept my company, towards the end of the month. I suspect, however, before that period you will be evacuating Walcheren, contracting for bark and port-wine, selling off the transports, and putting an end to that system of vigour which, when displayed by individuals instead of nations, is usually mitigated by a strait waistcoat and low diet.

There is no man who thinks better of what you and your coadjutors can and will do; but I cannot help looking upon it as a most melancholy proof of the miserable state of this country, when men of integrity and ability are employed. If it were possible to have gone on without them, I am sure they would never have been thought of. Yours ever most truly,

Sydney Smith.

54.] To Lord Holland.

Howick, Nov. 1st, 1809.

My dear Lord Holland,

I would have answered your kind note sooner, but that it followed me here, after being detained for a day or two at York.

Whatever little interest or connection I may have shall be exerted in favour of Lord Grenville, to whom I sincerely wish success.

It will be doing a good action, I conjecture, if his lordship ever brings Peter Plymley out of Yorkshire; because, though the said Peter does not by any means dislike living in the country, he would, as I understand, prefer that the country in which he does live were nearer his old friends. I should not be in the least surprised if this grave writer, in some shape or another, made his appearance next spring, if the then state of affairs should enable him to write with effect and utility.

The noble Earl here is in perfect health, and so are all his family. I have been spending a fortnight with him, and think him in appearance quite another person from what he was last year.

I have a project of publishing in the spring a pamphlet, which I think of calling 'Common Sense for 1810;' for which I will lay down some good doctrines, and say some things which I have in my head, and which I am sure it will be very useful to say. If I do, I will write it here, and improve it when I obtain further information from you in town. But what *use* is there in all this, or in anything else? Omnes ibimus ad Diabolum, et Buonaparte nos conquerabit, et dabit Hollandiam Domum ad unum corporalium suorum, et ponet ad mortem Joannem Allenium.

Yours ever most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

55.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

November 4th, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have just returned from Lord Grey's, and have only leisure to reply to the business part of your letter. You may write to Payne Knight without scruple, and, using your old illustration of Czar Peter, you may mention money; or rather leave that to me, and I will write to him about it. I hope you will not be affronted if I *seriously* advise you to *dictate* a letter to him. Your motto is, *Mens sine manu.*

Blomfield is an admirable scholar. Publish his review, and Payne Knight will write you something else; but this is just as you please; I have no wish really upon the subject. I will write soon at length. God bless you!

Sydney Smith.

56.] To John Allen, Esq.

York, Nov. 22nd, 1809.

Dear Allen,

I am much obliged to you for your book, to which I see but one objection, and that is, that there will be an end of Spain before the Cortes can be summoned, or the slightest of your provisions carried into execution,—admirable rules for diet to a patient in the article of death. I shall read it however, as a Utopia from your romantic brain.

I beg my congratulations to the Lord and Lady of the Castle on the event which your postscript announces to me for the first time. Let the child learn

principles from Dumont, Sharpe shall teach him ease and nature, Lauderdale wit, my own Pybus shall inspire his muse, and —— shall show him the way to heaven.

As for the Opposition, if they give up the Catholics, I think their character is ruined. Ireland is much endangered, and the King will kick them out again after he has degraded them. A politician should be as flexible in little things as he is inflexible in great. The probable postponement of such a measure in such times for ten years,—how is it possible for any honest public man to take office at such a price? I have no doubt that the country would rather submit to Massena than to Whitbread. If the King were to give the opposition *carte blanche* tomorrow, I cannot see that they could form an administration in the House of Commons. I have not promised, as you say, to write a pamphlet called Common Sense, in the spring; it is of very little or no consequence whether I do write it or not, but I have by no means made up my mind to do it.

We have a report here that the measles and hooping-cough have got amongst the New Administration; it is quite foolish to make such young people ministers.

Yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I will send you in return for your pamphlet a sermon against horse-racing and coursing, *judiciously* preached before the Archbishop and the sporting clergy of Malton.

57.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

November 29th, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have not yet written to Payne Knight, nor do I think any man but yourself has sufficient delicacy and felicity of expression to offer a man of ten thousand a year a few guineas for a literary *jeu d'esprit;* I think, therefore, I must turn it over to you, with many apologies for the delay occasioned by the mis-estimation of my own powers.

I should like to review a little pamphlet upon Public Schools, Pinkey's 'Travels in the South of France,' and Canning's Letter, if published in a separate pamphlet, as I believe it is.

I have just published a sermon, which I will send you,—very commonplace, like all the others, but honest, and published for a particular reason.

The question in politics is, if the Catholics will be given up? That the whole business will be brought to that issue I do not doubt;—that everything (in spite of Lord Wellesley's acceptance) will be offered to the late Administration, if they will give up the gentlemen of the crucifix.

Nine bishops vote for Lord Grenville at the Oxford election! and the Archbishop of York has written and circulated a high panegyric upon his (Lord G.'s) good dispositions towards the Church; I mean, circulated it in letters to his correspondents.

Ever, my dear Jeffrey, your sincere friend,

Sydney Smith.

58.] To Lady Holland.

Heslington, Dec. 8th, 1809.

Dear Lady Holland,

I have been long intending to write you a letter of congratulation. There is more happiness in a multitude of children than safety in a multitude of counsellors; and if I were a rich man, I should like to have twenty children.

It seems to me that Canning would come in again under Lord Wellesley, and the whole of this eruption would end with making a stronger Ministry than before.

My wishes for Lord Grenville's success are, I confess, not very fervent: it would be exceedingly agreeable, considered as a victory gained over the Court, but it would connect Lord Grenville personally with high Tories and Churchmen, and operate as a very serious check to the liberal views which he now entertains; and as I consider Lord Grenville as a Magdalene in politics, I always suspect there may be a hankering after his old courses, and wish therefore to keep him as much as possible out of bad company. The Archbishop of these parts not only votes for him, but writes flaming panegyrics upon him, which he has read to me. There are eight other bishops who vote for him. It seems quite unnatural,—like a murrain among the cattle.

I hear you have a good tutor for Henry, which I am exceedingly glad of. Lord Grey has met with no tutor as yet; tutors do not like to go beyond Adrian's Wall. You are aware that it is necessary to fumigate Scotch tutors: they are excellent men, but require this little

preliminary caution. They are apt also to break the church windows, and get behind a hedge and fling stones at the clergyman of the parish, and betray other little symptoms of irreligion; but these you must not mind: Send me word if he has any tricks of this kind. I have seen droves of them, and know how to manage them. Very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

59.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, December, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

Will you be so good as to send me the names of the original contributors to the Review?

I have scarcely any belief in a change of Administration if they get Canning; if they do not, they are surely as blamable as a man who, intending to go a journey with great expedition, does not hire a chaise-and-four.

I like Playfair's review, though I comprehend it not; but, as a Dutchman might say, who heard Erskine or you speak at the bar, "I am sure I should be pleased with that man's eloquence, if I could comprehend a word he said." So I give credit to Playfair for the utmost perspicuity and the most profound information, though I understand not what he says, nor am at all able to take any measure of its importance.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey! Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

60.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Heslington, Dec. 18th, 1809.

My dear Allen,

Whoever wants a job done goes to ——; whoever wants sense and information on any subject applies to you.

Do you think Canning's pamphlet a fit subject for the Review? Does it appear to you, as it does to me, a very inefficient and unsatisfactory answer? Don't you think, even from his own account, that he used Castlereagh ill in endeavouring for the first two months to ascertain whether or not he was informed of his (Canning's) objections? Did he not behave very ill to the country in remaining so long a time in office with this (as he thought) bad minister? and in suffering him to retain the management of such an expedition? Do you not think that Lord Wellesley was waiting the result of this intrigue? I shall be very much obliged to you to give me your opinion on these points as soon as you can, that I may (if it shall appear expedient after the receipt of your letter) prepare a proper mixture for my friend.

Yours, dear Allen, most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

61.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Heslington, Dec. 28th, 1809.

Dear Allen,

I fear you will think me capricious, but in the interval between my letter and yours, I received a letter from Jeffrey, strongly pressing me to give up the idea

of reviewing the pamphlet, as derogatory to the Review; coming after a letter from Abercrombie, in answer to one of mine, strongly to the same purpose. To the union of such authority, and the arguments with which they supported it, I gave up, and not hearing from you, finally relinquished the idea, which now to resume would appear light and inconsiderate.

I have received four or five letters from some of our friends respecting my sermon; not a word about perseverance in the Catholic question: I see plainly the Protestant religion is gaining ground in the King of Clubs.

I have sent my sermon to John the Silent, and should be obliged to him for the living of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, in return. Scire potestates herbarum usumque—I should take for my motto.

I have had a long letter from Brougham upon the subject of my sermon. Do you not think his conduct of the war admirable? I would not for the earth tell you the complimentary simile I have made to him upon it. Ever yours, dear Allen, very faithfully,

SYDNEY SMITH.

62.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date: about 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have no doubt of Lord Morpeth's good disposition towards me, but he is afraid of introducing such a loquacious personage to his decorous parent. This however is very fair; and I hope my children will have the opposite dread, of introducing very silent people to me in my old-age.

I like Lord Morpeth,—a man of excellent understanding, very polished manners, and a good heart.

I take it this letter will follow you to Burgos, as I conclude you are packed up for Spain. Dumont, Bentham, and Horner sail in September, with laws, constitution, etc. A list of pains and pleasures, ticketed and numbered, already sent over; with a smaller ditto of emotions and palpitations.

I mean to make some maxims, like Rochefoucauld, and to preserve them. My first is this:—After having lived half their lives respectably, many men get tired of honesty, and many women of propriety.

Yours very affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

63.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, Jan. 7th, 1810.

Dear Murray,

I have not been unmindful of your commission; but no estate of the atheistical or tithe-free species has occurred since you were here, with the exception of one, the particulars of which are travelling to you *viâ* Horner.

I believe Horner's speech to have been very sensible, and full of good constitutional law; and, upon the whole, without amounting to any very luminous display, to have done him *great* credit. Leach is the man who has distinguished himself the most.

Your grouse are not come by this day's mail, but I suppose they will come tomorrow. Even the rumour of grouse is agreeable; many thanks to you for your kindness. I should certainly have come on to Edin-

burgh, but it was Christmas; and at that season, you know, there are divers family dinners to be eaten. Ever, my dear Murray, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

64.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 27th, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I always thought Lord Grenville would give up the Catholics, and I think Earl Grey right about the veto. I cannot say how much I like the said Earl;—a fine nature, a just and vigorous understanding, a sensitive disposition, and infirm health. These are his leading traits. His excellencies are courage, discretion, and practical sense; his deficiency, a want of executive coarseness.

Poor ——! pray remind him of my existence, of my good wishes towards him, of our common love of laughter, and our common awkwardness in riding.

Many thanks to John Allen for his letter in answer to my first imputation, of the horrid crime of Protestantism having crept into the King of Clubs. He is forced, at last, to reduce himself to Lord Holland, to Romilly, the atrocious soul of Cato, and that complex bundle of ideas which is popularly called *Allen*. As for Romilly, he has no merit in not changing; *les principes* are eternal, and totally independent of events. Benthamism is supposed to have existed before time and space; and goes on by immutable rules, like freezing and thawing. To give up the Catholics, would be to confound the seventeenth pain with the eighteenth.

Farewell, my dear Lady Holland; for I should go

on scribbling this nonsense all night, as I should talking it, if I were near you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

65.] *From Mrs. Sydney Smith to Francis Jeffrey, Esq.**

Heslington, 1810.

My dear Mr. Jeffrey,

I have scarcely a moment in which to tell you,—what, by the bye, I ought to have done a week since, and should have done, but that I have been too ill to write a single word that I could avoid,—that Sydney comes home the 17th; and therefore, as soon as you can resolve to come to us, *tant mieux pour nous.* It will make us both sincerely happy to see you, for as long a time as you can contrive to spare us; and I hope you will give us the satisfaction of seeing you quite well.

We have been a sad house of invalids here, but we are all cheering up at the prospect of Sydney's return. The other day, poor little Douglas was lying on the sofa very unwell, while Saba and I were at dinner; and I said, "Well, dear little Chuffy, I don't know what is the matter with us both, but we seem very good-for-nothing!" "Why, mamma," said Saba, "*I'll* tell you what the matter is: you are so melancholy and so dull because papa is away; he is so merry, that he makes us all gay. A family doesn't prosper, I see, without a papa!" I am much inclined to be

* This letter is so complete and faithful a family picture, that I have not been able to resist the temptation to insert it. The joyous and joy-giving father, the tender and devoted wife and mother, the happy children, sensible of their happiness, are all placed before us in these few words.—ED.

of her opinion: and suspecting that the observation would please him quite as well as that of any of his London flatterers, I despatched it to him the next day.

Yours very sincerely,

CATHARINE AMELIA SMITH.

66.] To LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, April 21st, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I found all here quite well, after some illness and much despondency; of which, if my absence were not the cause, my return has been the cure.

Letters awaited me here from his Smallness Mr. Jeffrey, stating his extreme lack of matter for the ensuing number of the Edinburgh Review. The time allotted is so short, that I shall have no opportunity of introducing any of those admirable and serious papers of which your ladyship has so unjust an abhorrence, but in which my *forte* really consists.

I hope you like Holland House after dirty Pall Mall. You will only have a few real friends till about the 15th of May. As soon as the lilac begins to blossom, and the streets to get hot, even Fish Crawford will come. I am sure it is better for Lord Holland and you to be at Holland House, because you both hate exercise (as every person of sense does), and you must be put in situations where it can be easily and pleasantly taken. Even Allen gets some exercise at Holland House, for Horner, Sheridan, and Lord Lauderdale take him out on the gravel-walk, to milk him for bullion, Spain, America, and India; whereas, in London, he is milked in that stall below-stairs.

I hope your dinner at Rogers's was pleasant, and that it makes not a solitary exception to the nature and quality of his entertainments.

I will say nothing of poor Mr. Windham. Lord Holland and you must miss him, in every sense of the word, deeply.

I am sorry the Opposition have taken such a strong part in favour of the privileges of the House, for I am sure it is the wrong side of the question; and the democrats have chosen admirable ground to fight the other political parties upon, and will, in the end, defeat them.

There is nothing, I think, good in the Edinburgh Review this time, but Allen's two papers on Spanish America.

SYDNEY SMITH.

67.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

June, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am truly glad that Tierney is better from those nitrous baths. Can so much nitrous acid get into the human frame without producing some moral and intellectual effect as well as physical? If you watch, I think you will find changes. You have done an excellent deed in securing a seat for poor Mackintosh, in whose praise I most cordially concur. He is very great, and a very delightful man, and, with a few bad qualities added to his character, would have acted a most conspicuous part in life. Yet, after all, he is rather academic than forensic. A professorship at Hertford is well imagined, and if he can keep clear of

contusions at the annual peltings, all will be well. The season for lapidating the professors is now at hand; keep him quiet at Holland House till all is over.*

If I could envy any man for successful ill-nature, I should envy Lord Byron for his skill in satirical nomenclature.

Nothing can exceed the evils of this spring. All agricultural operations are at least a month behindhand. The earth, that ought to be as hard as a biscuit, is as soft as dough. We live here in great seclusion;—happily and comfortably. My life is cut up into little patches. I am schoolmaster, farmer, doctor, parson, justice, etc. etc.

I hope you have read, or are reading, Mr. Stewart's book, and are far gone in the philosophy of mind; a science, as he repeatedly tells us, still in its infancy: I propose, myself, to wait till it comes to years of discretion. I hear Lord Holland has taken a load of fishing-tackle with him. *This* is a science which appears to me to be still in its infancy.

Do not let Allen stay too long at home; it will give him a turn for the domestic virtues, and spoil him.

We are all well, and unite, my dear Lady Holland, in the kindest regards to you and the noble fisherman.

SYDNEY SMITH.

68.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, July, 1810.

My dear Jeffrey,

Respecting my sermons, I most sincerely beg of you

* This refers to some outbreaks of insubordination among the students at Haileybury College.—ED.

to extenuate nothing. Treat me *exactly* as I deserve. Remember only what it is you are reviewing,—an oration confined by custom to twenty or thirty minutes, before a congregation of all ranks and ages. Do not be afraid of abusing me, if you think abuse necessary: you will find I can bear it extremely well from you.

As for the Quarterly Review, I have not read it, nor shall I, nor *ought* I—where abuse is intended, not for my correction, but my pain. I am however very fair game: if the oxen catch the butcher, they have a right to toss and gore him.

I can only trifle in this Review. It takes me some time to think about serious subjects, not having my head full of all arguments on all subjects, like a certain friend of mine,—to whom all happiness!

SYDNEY SMITH.

I get my hay in on Monday.

69.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, Nov. 3rd, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope you are returned quite well, and much amused, from your Portsmouth excursion; for I presume you *are* returned, as I see Lord Holland has been speaking in the House of Lords.

We had a brisk run on the road,—Horner, Murray, Jeffrey, Mrs. ——, my brother Cecil. We liked Mrs. ——. It was wrong, at her time of life, to be circumvented by ——'s diagrams; but there is some excuse in the novelty of the attack, as I believe she is the first

lady that ever fell a victim to algebra, or that was geometrically led from the paths of discretion.

I had occasion to write to Brougham on some indifferent subject, and stated to him (as I knew it would give him pleasure) the bullion glory of Horner; every ounce of him being now worth, at the Mint price, £3 17*s.* 4½*d.*! Brougham expresses himself in raptures.

SYDNEY SMITH.

70.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

November 29th, 1810.

Dear Lady Grey,

Thank you very kindly for your obliging invitation to me and Mrs. Smith. Nothing would give Mrs. Sydney more pleasure than to make your acquaintance, and I am sure you would not find her unworthy of it; but the care of her young family, and the certain conviction, if she leaves them for a day, that they are all dead, necessarily confines her a good deal at home. Some lucky chance may however enable her hereafter to pay her respects to you; and she will, I am sure, avail herself of it with great pleasure.

If you and Lord Grey (little tempted by raree-shows) can be tempted to see York Minster, you must allow us to do the honours. We are on the road. We are about equal to a second-rate inn, as Mrs. Sydney says; but I think, myself, we are equal to any inn on the North Road, except Ferry-bridge.

The Archbishop of York not only votes for Lord Grenville, but has passed upon him and his ecclesiastical propensities a warm panegyric, which he has read to me, has sent to Oxford, and dispersed everywhere.

There are eight bishops who vote for him. I call them the Sacred Nine!

My discourse will be finished tomorrow, and shall be forthwith sent. I am obliged to you for your opinion of my orthodoxy, which I assure you is no more than I deserve. As for being a bishop, that I shall never be; but I shall, I believe, be quite as happy a man as any bishop.

I remain, dear Lady Grey, very sincerely and respectfully yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I am performing miracles in my parish with garlic for hooping-cough.

71.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

December 5th, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have understood that Sir James Mackintosh is about to return, of which I am very glad. I shall like him less than I did, when I thought *Philowsophee* to be of much greater consequence than I now do; but I shall still like him very much.

Bobus is upon the eve of his return, and I rather think we shall see him in the spring.

Lord Holland is quite right to get a stock of eatable sheep; but such sheep are not exclusively the product of Scotland, but of every half-starved, ill-cultivated country; and are only emphatically called Scotch, to signify ill-fed; as one says Roman, to signify brave. They may be bought in Wales, in any quantity; and every November, at Helmsley, in Yorkshire: the mut-

ton you ate at my house was from thence. Helmsley is two hundred and twenty miles from London.

I am, my dear Lady Holland, yours sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

72.] TO THE EARL GREY.

December 29th, 1810.

My dear Lord,

I am very much obliged to you for your kindness in sending me the pheasants. One of my numerous infirmities is a love of eating pheasants.

I am always sorry for any evil that happens to Lady Grey, be it only a sick finger; no light malady, when it prevents those who respect her as much as I do from receiving a letter from her. I shall have great pleasure in criticizing the flower-garden next year, but still have a hankering for a little bit of green in the middle.

I wish I could write as well as Plymley; but if I could, where is such a case to be found? When had any lawyer such a brief? The present may be a good brief, but how can it be *so* good?

To write such letters as you require, it would be necessary (supposing, as you politely suppose, that I could do the thing well under any circumstances) that I should be near you, and in London: materials furnished at such a distance from you and the press, would never do; especially in a production that must be hasty, if it is at all. You may depend upon it, I will be as good as my word, and write one or two pamphlets. I shall never own them, and you will probably read them without knowing them to be mine; but it will be contributing my mite to a good cause.

It is foolish to boast that I intend to subscribe a mite; it is better to do it, and be silent; but I spake it between the hours of six and eight, and to the leader of the Whigs.

I dare say you are right about ——'s declaration; and as I never find you averse to reason a matter with a person so politically ignorant as myself, were I in Howick library, I dare say I should soon yield to your explanations. It appears to me that the little Methodist says, "There is a vacancy in the Government; I will proceed to fill it up, in a manner which appears to me (and has before appeared to Mr. Pitt) the most eligible. In the meantime, as there is no executive government, the public service must not suffer. *We* (not *I*) will perform every function of the Executive, and then come for a bill of indemnity."

Now, if his plan for a Regency is right, how is his declaration blamable? Somebody *must* act till the vacancy is filled up; and if not the Ministers, who besides? But they have not filled up this vacancy in the most expeditious manner. True,—they are blamable; not for acting executively in the interval, but for not making that interval as short as possible.

Excuse my heresies: you know that a short argument often teaches me.

Ever, my dear Lord, yours most sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH

73.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, 1810.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have just had a letter from Horner, who is in-

clined to think Perceval will make a struggle against the Prince. I wish he may, and so thoroughly disgust the said Prince, that no future meanness will be accepted as an atonement. The best news that Horner sends is, that the Prince has behaved extremely well. It is nonsense however to look about in England for political information. The most delicate and sensitive turpitude is always to be met with in Scotland: there are twenty people in Edinburgh whose manners and conduct are more perfect exponents of the King's health than the signatures of his physicians.

I am obliged to you for the kind things you say to me about myself. There is nobody, my dear Jeffrey, whose good opinion I am more desirous of retaining, or whose sagacity and probity I more respect. Living a good deal alone (as I now do) will, I believe, correct me of my faults; for a man can do without his own approbation in much society, but he must make great exertions to gain it when he lives alone. Without it, I am convinced, solitude is not to be endured.

I have read, since I saw you, Burke's works, some books of Homer, Suetonius, a great deal of agricultural reading, Godwin's 'Enquirer,' and a great deal of Adam Smith. As I have scarcely looked at a book for five years, I am rather hungry.

God bless you, dear Jeffrey! Ever your sincere friend,

S. S.

74.] TO THE EARL GREY.

January 2nd, 1811.

Dear Lord Grey,

I congratulate you very sincerely upon the safety of

Lady Grey; and I beg you will convey, also, my kind congratulations to her. I think now you will not be ashamed to speak with your enemies in the gate.

I have just been reading Allen's account of your Administration. Very well done, for the cautious and decorous style; but it is quite shameful that a good stout answer has not been written to your calumniators. The good points of that Administration were the Slave Trade, Newport's Corn Bill, Romilly's Bankrupt Bill, the attempt at Peace, and the efforts made for the Catholics. The disadvantages under which the Administration laboured were, the ruin of Europe—the distress of England—and the hatred of King and people. The faults they committed were, not coming to a thorough understanding with the King about the Catholics—making a treasurer an auditor, and a judge a politician—protecting the King's money from decimation—and increasing the number of foreign troops.

Balancing the good and the evil, I am sure there has been no such honest and enlightened Administration since the time of Lord Chatham. God send it a speedy return!

Ever yours, my dear Lord, with most sincere respect and regard,

SYDNEY SMITH.

75.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Heslington, York, Jan. 13th, 1811.

Dear Lady Grey,

This comes to say that you must not be out of spirits on account of Lord Grey's going to town; but

rather thank Providence that you did not marry one of those stupid noblemen who are never sent for to town on any occasion. Mrs. —— never loses Mr. ——; Mr. —— lives with Mrs. ——; and why? Who wants their assistance? What good could they do in any human calamity? Who would send for them, even to consult about losing a tooth? So that the temporary loss of Lord Grey is *his* glory and *yours*, and the *common good*. And you are bound to remain quietly in your Red Bell* till you become strong enough for travelling. If you are haunted by scruples too difficult for Mr. —— (alas! how easily may anything be too difficult for Mr. ——!), then pray send for me.

As I know what a pleasure it is to you to hear or read any good praise of Lord Grey, I send you an extract from Mr. Horner's letter to me this day. "Lord Grey's absence, though scarcely excusable, has done no harm. He is decidedly at the head of the great aristocracy, including not only Whigs, but a great many Tories. I wish he were * * * he wants only that, to give him the power of doing more good, and commanding greater influence, than any man has done since the time of Fox. He deserves all the praises bestowed upon him. A more upright, elevated, gallant mind there cannot be; but * * * and will not condescend to humour them, and pardon them for their natural infirmities; nor is aware that *both people and Prince must be treated like children.*"

You may fill up the blanks as you like; but if you valued Mr. Horner's understanding and integrity one-

* A room of Lady Grey's, so called by Mr. Sydney Smith, exactly the size of the large bell at Moscow.

half as much as I do, you would, I am sure, value this praise.

A pheasant a day is very fattening diet: such has been my mode of living for these last few days. I was poetical enough, though, to think I had seen them out of my window, at Howick, whilst I was dressing, and to fancy that I liked eating them the less on that account.

Health and happiness, and every good wish, dear Lady Grey, to you and yours!

SYDNEY SMITH.

76.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Heslington, York, Jan. 24th, 1811.

Dear Lady Grey,

Thank you for your obliging and friendly letter. I believe every word you say as implicitly as I should if you had never stirred from Howick all your life. And this is much to say of any one who has lived as much in the high and gay world as you have done. I shall be glad to hear that you are safely landed in Portman-square, with all your young ones; but do not set off too soon, or you will be laid up at the Black Swan, Northallerton, or the Elephant and Castle, Boroughbridge, and your bill will come to a thousand pounds, besides the waiter, who will most probably apply for a place under Government.

We are all perfectly well, and panting to show you, in the summer, ourselves and York Cathedral. I had occasion to write to ——, and gave her a lecture upon humility, and against receiving me with pride and grandeur when I come to town; I give *you* no such

lecture, for I should accost you with as much confidence if you were Queen of Persia, because I am quite sure you are power-proof. But you will not be put to the test, for the King will recover. The late majorities against the Prince are, I think, quite decisive that the King's health is improving; but this you know better than I do.

Never was such a ferment as Pall Mall and Holland House are in! John Allen, wild and staring,—Antonio, and Thomas, the porter, worked off their legs,—Lord Lauderdale sleeping with his clothes on, and a pen full of ink close to his bedside, with a string tied on the wrist of his secretary in the next room! Expresses arriving at Pall Mall every ten minutes from the House of Commons, and the Whig nobility and commonalty dropping in at all hours to dinner or supper! Is not your Bell better than this? Nevertheless, get well, and quit it. There is great happiness in the country, but it requires a visit to London every year to reassure yourself of this truth.

SYDNEY SMITH.

77.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 24th, 1811.

Dear Lady Holland,

You will read (perhaps not)—but there will be of mine—in the Edinburgh Review a short account of the Walcheren Expedition, observations upon Lord Sidmouth's project against Dissenters, and Walton's Spanish Colonies.

If there be a Regency, I guess the following Administration:—Lord Grey, First Lord of the Treasury;

Lord Grenville, Foreign Office; Lord Holland, Home Department; Erskine, Chancellor; Lord Moira, Commander-in-Chief; Lord Spencer, Admiralty; Romilly and Leach, Attorney and Solicitor; Pigott, Exchequer or Common Pleas; Tierney, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Lansdowne, Ireland; Whitbread, Secretary-at-War and Colonies; Abercrombie, Secretary of State; Lord Morpeth, Board of Control; Lord Robert Spencer, National Woodsman. The President of the Council and the Privy Seal I cannot guess, unless Lord Stafford should be the former; and it would be much better if Lord Holland were Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Grenville for the Home Department.

The drawing-room in Pall Mall must have been an entertaining scene for some weeks past: the crowds below waiting upon Allen for facts, and acquaintances of 1806 calling above. Lord Lauderdale has, I hear, not had his clothes off for six weeks. Pray remember me very kindly to him: I cannot say how much I like him.

I hope to see your Ladyship early in April, by which time the tumult will be hushed, and you will be either in full power, or in perfect weakness.

SYDNEY SMITH.

78.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

February, 1811.

My dear Lady Holland,

I was terribly afraid at first that the Prince had gone over to the other party; but the King's improved condition leaves a hope to me that his conduct has

been dictated by prudence, and the best idea he can form of filial piety from books and chaplains; for that any man in those high regions of life, cares for his father, is what I cannot easily believe. That he will gain great popularity from his conduct, I have no doubt;—perhaps he may deserve it, but I see through a Yorkshire glass, darkly.

I am exceedingly glad Lord Holland has taken up the business of libels; the punishment of late appears to me most atrocious. If libels against the public are *very* bad, they become sedition or treason; new crimes may be punished as such; but as long as they are *only* libels, such punishments as have been lately inflicted are preposterous; and seem to proceed from that hatred which feeble and decorous persons always feel against those who disturb the repose of their minds, call their opinions in question, and compel them to think and reason. There should be a maximum of imprisonment for libel. No man should be imprisoned for more than a year for any information filed by the Attorney-General. Libels are not so mischievous in a free country, as Mr. Justice Grose, in his very bad lectures, would make them out to be. Who would have mutinied for Cobbett's libel? or who would have risen up against the German soldiers? And how easily might he have been answered! He deserved some punishment; but to shut a man up in gaol for two years for such an offence is most atrocious. Pray make Lord Holland speak well and eloquently on this subject.

SYDNEY SMITH.

79.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Heslington, Feb. 19th, 1811.

My dear Jeffrey,

It is long since I have written to you,—at least, I hope you think so. Where is the Review? We are come to the birth, and have not strength to bring forth. It is very possible that I have not done justice to your article upon the Catholics, but the subject is so worn out that I read it hastily; and though I like almost everything you like, I was not violently arrested by any passage. Their exclusion from office is, I perceive by the papers, rather strongly put in the last Catholic debate, by enumerating, not the classes of offices from which they are shut out, but the total number of individual offices—thirty-five or forty thousand. This is a striking and popular way of putting the fact.

Do you believe that the Prince made this last change with the consent of the Whigs? I much doubt it; but if not, his information seems to have been better than theirs; for, with such an immediate propect of the king's recovery, a change in the Administration would have been quite ridiculous. I hope you will make some stay with us on your way to town, that Mrs. Sydney may see something of you. I know you are fond of riding, and I can offer you the use of a dun pony, which Murray knows to be a very safe and eligible conveyance. This revival of his Majesty has revived my slumbering architecture, and I think I shall begin building this year; yet I get heartily frightened when I think of it. Kirkpatrick's 'Embassy to Nepaul' is not yet published: so I cannot tell how much it will take up. Tell me some subjects for the next

number; I have none in contemplation but an article in favour of the Protestant Dissenters; and this is premature, as I think their case should be kept in the background till that of the Catholics is disposed of.

And yet what folly to talk in this manner! Are we not, like Brook Watson's leg, in the jaws of the shark? Can any sensible man,—any human being but a little trumpery parson,—believe that we shall not be swallowed up? It is folly not to gather up a little, while it is yet possible, and to go to America. We are all very well, engaged in the mystery of gardening, and other species of rural idleness, for which my taste grows stronger and stronger.

Ever, dear Jeffrey, affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

80.] To LADY HOLLAND.

81, *Jermyn-street, May 23rd*, 1811.

How very odd, dear Lady Holland, to ask me to dine with you on Sunday, the 9th, when I am coming to stay with you from the 5th to the 12th! It is like giving a gentleman an assignation for Wednesday, when you are going to marry him on the preceding Sunday,—an attempt to combine the stimulus of gallantry with the security of connubial relations. I do not propose to be guilty of the slightest infidelity to you while I am at Holland House, except you dine in town; and then it will not be infidelity, but spirited recrimination.

Ever the sincere and affectionate friend of Lady Holland.

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I believe no two Dissenting ministers will rejoice at Lord Sidmouth's defeat more than Lord Holland and myself.

81.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Heslington, June 22nd, 1811.

My dear Jeffrey,

Having quitted Capua, I must now to business.

I have received the Review, and am extremely pleased with the article upon the Liberty of the Press, and with the promise of its continuation. The review of Jacob's Travels I do not like; it is full of old grudges.

You over-praise all Scotch books and writers. Alison's is a pretty book, stringing a number of quotations upon a false theory, nearly true, and spun out to an unwarrantable size, merely for the sake of introducing the illustrations. I have not read your review, for I hate the subject; and you may conceive how much I hate it, when even your writing cannot reconcile me to it.

I am now hardening my heart, and correcting my idleness, as quickly as possible; I mean to be most penitently diligent.

I saw John Playfair in town—grown thinner and older by some years. Mrs. Apreece and the Miss Berrys say, that, on the whole, he is the only man who can be called irresistible.

Sydney Smith.

82.] To Lady Holland.

Heslington, July 17th, 1811.

My dear Lady Holland,

We have had Dugald Stewart and his family here for three or four days. We spoke much of the weather and other harmless subjects. He became however once a little elevated; and, in the gaiety of his soul, let out some opinions which will doubtless make him writhe with remorse. He went so far as to say he considered the King's recovery as very problematical.

The Archbishop says that Lord Ellenborough said to him, "Take care of Lord Holland, and I will take care of Romilly. The one wants to attack the Church, the other the Law." I assured his Grace it was a calumny.

Sydney Smith.

83.] To John Murray, Esq.

Heslington, Dec. 6th, 1811.

My dear Murray,

I cannot say how much mortified I am not to have reached Edinburgh; nothing should have prevented me but fraternity, and to that I was forced to yield.*

I went to Lord Grey's with young Vernon, the Archbishop's son, a very clever young man;—genus, Whig; species, Whigista Mitior; of which species I consider Lord Lansdowne to be at the head, as the Lords Holland and Grey are of the Whigista Truculentus Anactophonus. I heard no news at Howick. Lord Grey sincerely expects a change. I taxed him with saying

* Mr. Cecil Smith had lately returned from India.

so from policy, but he assured me it was his real opinion: perhaps it was.

I am reading Locke in my old-age, never having read him thoroughly in my youth:—a fine, satisfactory sort of fellow, but very long-winded.

You do not know, perhaps, that among my thousand and one projects is to be numbered a new metaphysical language,—a bold fancy for any man not born in Scotland. Physics, metaphysics, gardening, and jobbing are the privileges of the North. By the bye, have you ever remarked that singular verse in the Psalms, "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, neither from the south"?

I rather quarrel with you for not sending me some Edinburgh politics. I have a very sincere attachment to Scotland, and am very much interested by Scotch news. Five of the most agreeable years of my life were spent there. I have formed many friendships which I am sure will last as long as I live.

Adieu, dear Murray! Pray write to me.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

84.] TO MRS. APREECE.*

Heslington, Dec. 29th, 1811.

My dear Mrs. Apreece,

I am very much flattered by your recollection of me, and by your obliging letter. I have been following the plough. My talk has been of oxen, and I have gloried in the goad.

* Afterwards Lady Davy.

Your letter operated as a charm. I remembered that there were better things than these;—that there was a Metropolis; that there were wits, chemists, poets, splendid feasts, and captivating women. Why remind a Yorkshire resident clergyman of these things, and put him to recollect human beings at Rome, when he is fattening beasts at Ephesus?

The Edinburgh Review is just come out,—long and dull, as usual; to these bad results and effects I have contributed, in a review of Wyvill's 'Papers on Toleration.'

I shall be in London in March. Pray remain single, and marry nobody (let him be whom he may): you will be annihilated the moment you do, and, instead of an alkali or an acid, become a neutral salt. You may very likely be happier yourself, but you will be lost to your male friends.

My brother is a capital personage; full of sense, genius, dignity, virtue, and wit.

God bless you, dear Mrs. Apreece! Kind love from all here.

S. S..

P.S.—That rogue Jeffrey will have the whip-hand of me for a month; but I will annihilate him when I come up, if he gives himself airs, and affects to patronize me. Mind and cultivate Whishaw, and Dumont, and Tennant.

85.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

January, 1812.

Dear Jeffrey,

I certainly am very intolerant and impatient, and I

will endeavour to be less so, but do not be hurt by my critiques on your criticisms; you know (if you know anything) the love and respect I have for you; this is not enough—add also, the very *high admiration*. But it is the great fault of our Review that our wisdom is too long; it did well at first, because it was new to find so much understanding in a journal. But every man takes up a Review with a lazy spirit, and wishes to get wise at a cheap rate, and to cross the country by a shorter path. Health and respect!

SYDNEY SMITH.

86.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

June, 1812.

My dear Jeffrey,

I feel that I owe you an apology for troubling you so often about the Review; but I am really desirous of doing something for it, and, in my search for new books, they turn up at different times, and compel me to make these different appeals to you. The subjects I have already mentioned are:—1st. Sir F. Burdett on the Law of Imprisonment for Libel; 2nd. The Statement of the late Negotiations; 3rd. The Duke of Sussex's speech; 4th (and now for the first time), Halliday's 'Observations on the Present State of the Portuguese Army;' in which I propose to include some short statement of, and observations upon, Lord Wellington's campaigns in Portugal. The last undertaking is the only one to which a fresh answer is required from you.

Horner is, I think, getting better. There never was a period when the hopes of good Whigs were so cruelly

disappointed. I dare say Lords Grey and Grenville meant extremely well, but they have bungled the matter so, as to put themselves in the wrong, both with the public and with their own troops. The bad faith of the Court is nothing. If they had suspected that bad faith, they should have put it to the proof, and made it clear to all the world that the Court did not mean them well; at present they have made the Court the object of public love and compassion, made Lord Yarmouth appear like a virtuous man, given character to the Prince, and restored the dilapidation of kingly power.

I write from Cambridge, and shall be at York on Friday to dinner. Adieu! and believe me ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

87.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Heslington, August 17th, 1812.

Dear Lord Grey,

I really think you are unjust to ——. He may be capricious, unjust, fickle, a thousand faults; but, if you mean by discreditable motives, any love of office or concern about it, I sincerely think him exempted from any feelings of that nature.

I suppose you know by this time the nature of Canning's last negotiation; if not, he was to have come in with two members in a Cabinet of fifteen; and Lord Liverpool, who negotiated the arrangement, conceived it to be agreed between Lord Castlereagh and Canning that they were to enjoy co-ordinate power and importance in the Commons,—at least, as much

as any Ministerial arrangement could confer equal power upon such unequal men. In a subsequent explanation however, it turned out that Lord Castlereagh had no such intentions; that he intended to keep the lead in the House of Commons, and to be considered as the Minister of the Crown in that assembly. This put an end to the negotiation.

I do not know whether you like praise, but I cannot help saying how much I was struck with your style of writing in the State Papers published by Lord Moira. It is impossible that anything can be more clear, manly, and dignified; it is a *perfect model* for State-paper writing. After saying thus much of the *mode*, it is right to add, I am the critic in the Edinburgh Review upon the *substance* of the negotiation. I have given reasons for my opinion, preserving, as I hope, and intended and felt, the greatest possible respect for you; but I am foolish in supposing that you heed or read the obscure speculations of reviewers and scribblers.

I remain ever, my dear Lord Grey, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

88.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

September, 1812.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have to thank you for many kind letters, which I would have answered sooner, but that I have been expecting the Review, upon which I wished to offer you my opinion.

I like the review of Malcolm very much; there is such an appearance of profound knowledge of the sub-

ject, joined to so very gentlemanlike a spirit of forbearance, that it gives me considerable pleasure. I liked very much the article on Peace, and the review on Miss Edgeworth; John Knox I have not yet read. I am very glad you like my review of the Negotiation; pray tell me if it is much complained of by the Whigs. I shall not regret having written it if it is; but if I reconcile the interests of *truth* with the feelings of party, so much the better; I am sure it is the good sense and justice of the question.

Whilst I write, our poor, amiable old friend is mouldering in her tomb; I had a most sincere affection for her, and such a friend I shall not soon replace, and I feel the loss with very sincere grief. Miss —— is deeply affected: she is made up of fine feelings, and her mother filled her whole heart and soul.

I know not how to rejoice in the useless splendour of Lord Wellington's achievements, for I am quite a disbeliever in his ultimate success; but I am incapable of thinking of anything but building, and my whole soul is filled up by lath and plaster.

Mrs. Fletcher has been here and dined with us,—self and spouse. I was surprised to find her unaffected, and more sensible than from her blazing sort of reputation I had supposed to be the case; more handsome, too, than I had judged her in Edinburgh: in short, she produced a very agreeable impression both upon Mrs. Sydney and me.

I see Seymour is selling his Scotch place. I am glad to find you are in the country, for then I am sure you are happy. Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

89.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

December 29th, 1812.

My dear Allen,

I thank you sincerely for your friendly and considerate communication respecting the opinion of the Archbishop.

You may easily imagine that I have reflected a good deal upon the expediency of an undertaking so very serious as that of building. I may very likely have determined wrong, but I have determined to the best of my judgment, anxiously and actively exerted. I have no public or private chance of changing my situation for the better; such good fortune may occur, but I have no right to presume upon it. I have waited and tried for six years, and I am bound in common prudence to suppose that my lot is fixed in this land. That being so, what am I to do? I have no certainty of my present house; the distance is a great and serious inconvenience; if I am turned out of it, it will be scarcely possible, in so thinly inhabited a country, to find another. I am totally neglecting my parish. I ought to build; if I were bishop, I would compel a man in my situation to build; and should think that any incumbent acted an ungentlemanlike part who compelled me to compel him, and who did not take up the money which is lent by the Governors of Queen Anne's bounty for the purpose of building.

Such, I conceived, would be the Archbishop's opinion of me had I availed myself of his good-nature to apply for perpetual absence from my living, and for permission to live in hired houses. In all conver-

sations I have had with him, he has never discouraged the idea of building, but, on the contrary, always appeared to approve and promote it. I am therefore surprised not a little at what you tell me, and can only interpret it to mean that he would not absolutely have compelled me to build, but that he would have thought it mean and unfair in me not to have made an exertion of that kind. His mere forbearance from the use of authority is an additional reason for beginning. Lastly, I have gone so far that even if the communication were more authorized and direct, I could hardly recede. To kick down the money I have been saving for my family has cost me a great deal of uneasiness, and at one time I had thought of resigning my living. Having now decided according to the best means of an understanding extremely prone to error, nothing remains but to fight through my difficulties as well as I can.

It will give me sincere pleasure to think that you take an interest in my well-doing (not that I doubted it), but a particular instance (like this) is more cheering than a general belief.

Health, happiness, and as many new years as you wish!

SYDNEY SMITH.

90.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

January 1st, 1813.

My dear Allen,

* * * * *

As to politics, everything is fast setting in for arbitrary power. The Court will grow bolder and bolder; a struggle will commence, and if it ends as I wish, there

will be Whigs again, or if not, a Whig will be an animal described in books of natural history, and Lord Grey's bones will be put together and shown, by the side of the monument, at the Liverpool Museum. But when these things come to pass, you will no longer be a Warden, but a brown and impalpable powder in the tombs of Dulwich. In the mean time, enough of liberty will remain to make our old-age tolerably comfortable; and to your last gasp you will remain in the perennial and pleasing delusion that the Whigs are coming in, and will expire mistaking the officiating clergyman for a King's messenger.

But whatever your feelings be on this matter, mine for you will be always those of the most sincere respect and regard. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

91.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 17th, 1813.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have innumerable thanks to return to you for the kind solicitude you have displayed respecting my rural architecture. I have explained myself so fully to Allen upon the convenience and necessity of this measure, that I will not bore you any more with the subject; but I must add a word upon the Archbishop's conversation with Abercrombie. Is it not a little singular, that his Grace, in all the various conversations I have had with him on this subject,—on the promise I made to him to build,—on the complaints I have frequently made to him of the great hardships and expense of building, when I laid be-

fore him my plans,—that he should never have given me the most distant hint, directly or indirectly, that such a process could be in honour dispensed with? Is it not singular that he should have reserved this friendly charge of supererogation, till I had burnt my bricks, bought my timber, and got into a situation in which it was more prudent to advance than to recede? The Archbishop is a friendly, good man; but such is not the manner of laymen. It would be a bad comfort to an Indian widow, who was half-burnt, if the head Brahmin were to call out to her, "Remember, it is *your own act and deed;* I never ordered you to burn yourself."

We have had meetings here of the clergy, upon the subject of the Catholic question, but none in my district; if there be, I shall certainly give my solitary voice in favour of religious liberty, and shall probably be tossed in a blanket for my pains.

Conceive the horror of fourteen men hung yesterday! And yet it is difficult to blame the Judges for it, though it would be some relief to be able to blame them. The murderers of Horsefall were all Methodists; one of them, I believe, a preacher.

I hope you will take a ramble to the North this year. You want a tour; nothing does you so much good. Come and alarm the village, as you did before. Your coming has produced the same impression as the march of Alexander or Bacchus over India, and will be as long remembered in the traditions of the innocent natives. They still believe Antonio to have been an ape. Pray accept a Yorkshire ham, which set off yesterday, directed to Lord Holland, St. James's-square, by waggon which comes to the Bull and Mouth;

it weighs twenty pounds. I mention these particulars, because, when a thing is sent, it may as well be received, and not be changed.

SYDNEY SMITH.

92.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Bath, January 24th, 1813.

My dear Allen,

Vernon* has mistaken the object of my letter, and I have written to tell him so. I had no other object in writing to him than to say this: "Do not let the Archbishop imagine that I have either conceived or represented myself to be the martyr of his severity. I never thought I should be compelled, though I had no doubt I should be expected, to build, and fairly expected; and when any man who can command me to do a just thing, does not command me because he is afraid of appearing harsh, his forbearance is, and ought to be, as powerful as any mandate."

Vernon's reply to my first letter contains an express permission from the Archbishop to recede from my engagement, if I think fit. To this I have answered (with every expression of gratitude for the intention) that it comes too late; that I have incurred expenses and engagements which render it imprudent and impossible to retreat; that had I known myself two years ago to have been a free agent, as I now find I might have been, I would have set myself sincerely to work to find out some habitation without building; that I am convinced his Grace was misled by my light manner of talking of these matters, and never ima-

* Mr. Vernon Harcourt, son of the late Archbishop of York.

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gined me to be in earnest, or he would have expressed to me, when I made my promises, his opinion, which I have now received, and through the same friendly channel; lastly, that I believe, after all, I have done the wisest thing, and that by doing and suffering, I have no doubt of scrambling through my difficulties. This, said in as kind and civil a manner as I could adopt, was the substance of my answer to Vernon, and is of course my answer to the very kind and friendly remonstrances I have received from you.

When I say that I shall pass my life at Foston, I by no means intend to take a desponding view of my situation, or to doubt the kindness of those friends whom I love so sincerely, and from whom I have already received obligations which I never can forget while I can remember anything. But their power to do me good depends upon accidents upon which it would be folly in any man to found a regular calculation. Those accidental visitations of fortune are like prizes in the lottery, which must not be put into the year's income till they turn up. My fancy is my own: I may see as many crosiers in the clouds as I please; but when I sit down seriously to consider what I shall do upon important occasions, I must presume myself rector of Foston for life.

I shall be in town Wednesday night late, and stay only four or five days.

What you say about the Whigs, the measure you take of their usefulness, and of the share of power they may enjoy, is fair and reasonable.

Ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

93.] To Robert Smith, Esq.

March 17th, 1813.

My dear Bobus,

It seems to me a long time since I heard from you. Pray write to me, and if you are vexed, or uneasy, or dispirited, do not be too proud to say so.

I have heard about you from various good judges, all of whom concur in the statement made to me from Holland House; that the coach appeared to be made of admirable materials, and that its breaking down was a mere accident, for which it is impossible to account. I see you have spoken again, but your speech is only given in my three days' paper, and that very concisely. If you said what you had to say without a fresh attack of nervousness, this is all I care about. If the body does not play you these tricks, I have no fear of the mind. By the bye, you will laugh at me, but I am convinced a working senator should lead a life like an athlete. I wish you would let me send you a horse, and that you would ride every morning ten or fifteen miles before breakfast, and fling yourself into a profuse perspiration. No man ever stopped in a speech, that had perspired copiously that day. Do you disdain the assistance of notes?

I am going on prosperously with my buildings, but I am not yet out of sight of land. We most earnestly hope nothing will prevent you this year from coming down into Yorkshire. I have learnt to ride backwards and forwards to my living since I saw you, by which means I do not sleep away from home;—and I have found so good a manager of my accounts, that one day a week is sufficient for me to give up to my buildings.

When you have done anything that pleases yourself, write me word; it will give me the most unfeigned pleasure. Whether you turn out a consummate orator or not, will neither increase nor diminish my admiration for your talents or my respect for your character; —but when a man is strong, it is pleasant to make that strength respected;—and you will be happier for it, if you can do so (as I have no doubt you will soon).

My very kind love to Caroline and the children, and believe me ever your affectionate brother,

SYDNEY SMITH.

94.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

April 6th, 1813.

Dear Jeffrey,

You write me a letter dated the 16th, in which you tell me you have sent me something; doubtless you suppose you have done so, but you have not. How goes on the next number? I am always afraid to ask this question, because I always expect to hear that the Review is dead or dying. I have but one occupation now,—building a house, which requires all my time and attention: I live trowel in hand.

I am much disappointed at ——. I had expected him to turn out a second Demosthenes, or even a second Jeffrey; how very much it must surprise you that anybody stops who has begun to speak!

I long very much to see you: we are old friends, I have a great affection for you, and admiration of your understanding, yet we never meet; some spell binds you to Edinburgh,—that town where so many philo-

sophers "think unknown, and waste no sweetness on the desert air."

The Miss —— are to come down to us in the month of June; why not come and marry ——? I will answer for it she will have you; by the bye, I hear you are going to be married, but that I have heard so many times, that it produces no impression on me. Mackintosh says you are the cleverest man he ever met with in his life.

SYDNEY SMITH.

95.] TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.

Heslington, York, May 10th, 1813.

My dear Bobus,

Maria writes Mrs. Sydney word that you are not quite so stout as you used to be. Pray take care of yourself. Let us contrive to last out for the same or nearly the same time: weary will be the latter half of my pilgrimage, if you leave me in the lurch!* By the bye, I wish Mrs. Smith and you would promise to inform me if you are ever seriously ill. I should come up to you at a moment's warning, and should be very unhappy if the opportunity were not given me of doing so.

I was very much pleased with Canning's additions to Grattan's Bills; they are very wise, because they give satisfaction to the great mass of fools, of whom the public is composed, and who really believe there is danger in conceding so much to the Catholics.

I cannot help detailing to you a remark of Douglas's,

* Mr. Robert Smith died within a fortnight of his brother. See Memoir, page 412.—ED.

which in Scotland would be heard as of high metaphysical promise.[1] Emily was asking why one flower was blue, and another pink, and another yellow. "Why, in short," said Douglas, "it is their *nature;* and when we say that, what do we mean? It is only another word for *mystery; it only means that we know nothing at all about the matter.*" This observation from a child eight years old is not common.

We are threatened with a visit from the excellent Greek, I understand, who is conducting his young warrior to the north. How contemptible our modern way of arming must appear to him! He will doubtless speak to the Colonel about the fighting in Homer, and the mode of it.

God bless you, dear Bobus! Love to your dear children.

SYDNEY SMITH.

96.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington. No date: supposed about 1813.

My dear Jeffrey,

It is with great concern that I hear of your illness, and should be much obliged to you, if you have leisure, to write me a line to say how you are. I need not say how very happy we should be to see you here; and I wish you seriously to consider whether some time passed in the country will not tend more than anything else to establish your health. I know it is the season of law business, but *Editoris salus, suprema lex.*

I have been passing some weeks of dissipation in London; and was transformed by Circe's cup, not

into a brute, but a beau. I am now eating the herb *moly* in the country. Near as the time approaches to the Review, I should not have been an idle contributor, but that I am forced to do many things for my brother Cecil, who has come from India in consequence of a quarrel with Sir G. Barlow, and who has much to arrange and settle with respect to the state of affairs there, and of Indian intrigues here. If I send you one or two light and insignificant articles, it will be all that I can possibly contribute. Do you mean to send me the lucubrations of Playfair and Knight touching Mr. Copplestone?

I am sure you will excuse me for saying that I was struck with nothing in your 'State of Parties' but its extreme temerity, and with the incorrectness of its statements. I was not struck with the good writing, because in you that is a matter of course; but I believe there never was so wrong an exposition of the political state of any country: to say we are approximating towards it, may be true; and so is a child just born approximating to old-age. I believe you take your notions of the state of opinion in Britain, from the state of opinion among the commercial and manufacturing population of your own country; overlooking the great mass of English landed proprietors, who, leaning always a little towards the Crown, would still rally round the Constitution and moderate principles, whenever the state of affairs came to be such as to make their interference necessary. If this notion of your review were merely my own, I should send it with more of apology, but it is that of the most sensible men I have met.

And why do you not scout more that pernicious

cant, that all men are equal? As politicians, they do not differ, as Locke thinks they do; but they differ enough to make you and all worthy men sincerely wish for the elevation of the one, and the rejection of the other.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey! Get well; come here to do so. Accept my best wishes, and believe me affectionately yours,

—SYDNEY SMITH.

97.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, July 12th, 1813.

My dear Murray,

I understand you are one of the Commissioners for managing the Edinburgh Review, in the absence of our small-bodied, great-minded leader. He has made to me an affecting appeal for assistance, and, for such as I can afford, shall not make it in vain; the difficulty is to find books, and I will review any two of the following:—Clarkson's 'Life of Penn,' Buchanan's 'Colonial Establishment,' Thompson's 'Travels in Sweden,' Graham's 'Residence in India,' or Horsley's 'Speeches.' Have the goodness, if you please, to tell me which of these I shall take, and at what time I shall send them, giving me all the time you can, for I really am distressed for that article.

My situation is as follows:—I am engaged in agriculture without the slightest knowledge of the art; I am building a house without an architect; and educating a son without patience! Nothing short of my sincere affection for Jeffrey, and pity for his transatlantic loves, should have induced me to draw my goose-quill.

My new mansion springs up apace, and then I shall really have a pretty place to receive you in, and a pleasant country to show you. Remember me very kindly to all my friends, and believe me, my dear Murray, ever most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

98.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

August 18th, 1813.

Dear Murray,

It is my serious intention to lend such aid as I can lend to the Review, in Jeffrey's absence. To render this intention useful, I hope he has left somebody who will look after the temporal concerns of the Review, and return an answer to those questions which a distant contributor must necessarily put. It was my intention to review Ferrier's 'Theory of Apparitions;' but it is such a null, frivolous book, that it is impossible to take any notice of it. I request therefore the choice of these subjects:—Milne's Controversy with Marsh, Pouqueville's 'Travels in the Morea,' Broughton's 'Letters from a Mahratta Camp,' or Sir J. Porter's 'Account of the last Russian Campaign.' I should prefer the first and the last. Pray let me know whether I may do them, or obtain, if you will be so good, an immediate answer for me from those with whom the power rests. I will take the first opportunity of returning Ferrier's 'Apparitions' to Constable.

My brother and all his family are with me.

I am sorry to hear of the loss of your old friend; such losses are seldom or never repaired; a friend

made at a middle period of life is never like a friend made at its beginning. I am sure a run in the country in England would do you good. It is the misfortune of Edinburgh men, that they see no fools and common persons (I mean, of clever men in Edinburgh); I could put you on a salutary course of this sort of society. Ever most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

99.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, Sept. 1st, 1813.

My dear Murray,

Barring accidents, I undertake for Broughton's 'Letters from a Mahratta Camp,' and Porter's 'Russian Campaign;' perhaps also Milner and Marsh. I would with pleasure comply with your request about Walpole, but find a most alarming good-nature increasing upon me from year to year, which renders me almost incapable of the task; but I will try.

I do not want the proofs, if any of the Commissioners will be so good as to attend to the corrections; for, I assure you, little Jeffrey sometimes leaves the printing in such a state of *absolute nonsense* as throws me into the coldest of sweats.

Yours, my dear Murray, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

100.] To LADY HOLLAND.

September 17th, 1813.

Dear Lady Holland,

Few events are of so little consequence as the fe-

'cundity of a clergyman's wife; still your kind dispositions towards me justify me in letting you know that Mrs. Sydney and her new-born son are both extremely well. His name will be Grafton, and I shall bring him up a Methodist and a Tory.

Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

101.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

October 15th, 1813.

My dear Murray,

I am quite ashamed of not having better fulfilled my promise; but, first, Mrs. Sydney has been confined; second, I am building a house; third, educating a son; fourth, entering upon a farm; fifth, after reading half through Porter's 'Russian Campaign,' I find it such an incorrigible mass of folly and stupidity, that nothing could be said of it but what was grossly abusive.

I have read the controversy about the Auxiliary Bible Society, and will speedily send you an article upon it.

SYDNEY SMITH.

I can give you no account of Mackintosh, nor tell you how he is to be stimulated.

102.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

November 29th, 1813.

My dear Murray,

I am sorry the editors of the Review should so construe my article as to suppose it inimical to the free

circulation of the Scriptures. I do not dissuade anybody from circulating the Scriptures; but merely say to a particular body of men, "You are bound in consistency to circulate the Scriptures with the Prayer-book, in preference to any other method." Nothing can be more ridiculous than the whole contest; but as it exists, I thought it right to notice it. Pray regulate the pecuniary concerns of the Review as you think best, and I shall be obliged to you to return my review when you have an opportunity of procuring a frank.

I am ashamed to say I have not read Brougham's article upon education; but I stated my argument to him in the summer, and he completely acquiesced in it.

I remain, dear Murray, in haste, yours very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

103.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Heslington, Jan. 13th, 1814.

My dear Allen,

I did not know before your letter that Lord Holland had been ill, and I received the intelligence, as you may suppose, with sincere regret. It is very easy and old-womanish to offer advice, but I wish he would leave off wine entirely, after the manner of the Sharpe and Rogers school. He is never guilty of excess; but there is a certain respectable and dangerous plenitude, not quite conducive to that state of health which all his friends most wish to Lord Holland.

What can you possibly mean by lamenting the restoration of the Bourbons? What so likely to pro-

mote renewed peace, and enable the French to lay some slight foundation of real liberty? for as to their becoming free at once, it is a mere joke. I think I see your old Edinburgh hatred of the Bourbons; but the misfortunes of the world have been such as to render even these contemptible personages our hope and our refuge.

We are all well, and I persevere in my intention of entering on my new house on the 25th of March.

I hear great complaints of Mackintosh's review of Madame de Staël, as too laudatory. Of this I cannot judge, as I have not read the original; but the review itself is very splendid, though (as is the case with all these polishers of precious stones) I remember of old many of the phrases and many of the opinions.

I am going to educate my little boy till he is twelve years old, being at present nine; and if I could get a clever boy to educate with him, I should be glad to do so. I would not take any boy who was not quick and clever, for such (unless the ordinary partiality of a parent mislead me) is Douglas; but I rather suppose it is too far from town for these sort of engagements.

There is a bad account of ——, and no wonder; the loss has been very severe, and he has never met with any check, but gone away before the wind all his life.

It will be very kind of you to write me a line now and then, and if you will have the goodness to do this, pray let me know how Mackintosh's speech went off: I have only the account of an honest citizen of York.

Pray tell Lady Holland I am a Justice of the Peace, —one of those rural tyrants so deprecated by poor

Windham. I am determined to strike into the line of analogous punishments.

Ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

104.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, March, 1814.

My dear Jeffrey,

When I tell you this is the last week of my old house, and that we are in all the agonies of departure and of packing up, you will excuse me that I have not written to you before. Accept my sincere congratulations, offered deliberately and upon reflection. The heart of man must have its cravings satisfied, as well as those of his belly. You have got a wife,—that is, something to love,—and you will be all the happier for it! I pronounce my benediction on the whole business.

I am obliged to you for the Review, which I have not had time to read. Brougham is, I believe, at York; but I have been away since the Circuit entered, and living at my farm-house lodgings, to superintend my buildings.

Pray explain to me what is or was intended, respecting the statues of Playfair and Stewart. I object to the marble compliment: it should have been a compliment in oil-paint, or, if marble, should have come down only to the shoulders; for if Playfair and Stewart (excellent men and writers as they are) are allowed marble from top to toe, what is there left for Newton, Washington, and Lord Wellington? My dilemma in this laudatory scheme is this:—if Playfair

and Stewart do not see the error and impropriety of the plan, they are not worthy of a statue; and if they do, it would be exceedingly wrong to erect one to them! People in England have a very bad habit of laughing at Scotch economy; and the supposition was that the statue was to be Januform, with Playfair's face on one side, and Stewart's on the other; and it certainly would effect a reduction in price, though it would be somewhat singular.

I have not read a paper for these four days; but this lingering war will not do for Buonaparte. The white cockade will be up, if he do not proceed more rapidly. I have no doubt but that the Bourbons must have a very large party in France, consisting of all those who love stability and peace better than eternal war and agitation; but these men have necessarily a great dread of Buonaparte,—a great belief in his skill, fortune, and implacability. It will take them years after he is killed to believe that he is dead.

Can I be of any service for the next number of the Review? I shall be very happy to be so, if anything occur, and if (as I now think I shall have) I have leisure to attend to it. We are all extremely well; Mrs. Sydney, never better. Pray remember me, dear Jeffrey, and say a good word for me if I die first. I shall say many for you in the contrary event!

When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days I passed there, amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings!

Ever your most sincere friend,

S. S.

105.] To John Allen, Esq.

March 10th, 1814.

Dear Allen,

I cannot at all enter into your feelings about the Bourbons, nor can I attend to so remote an evil as the encouragement to superstitious attachment to kings, when the proposed evil of a military ministry, or of thirty years more of war, is before my eyes. I want to get rid of this great disturber of human happiness, and I scarcely know any price too great to effect it. If you were sailing from Alicant to Aleppo in a storm, and, after the sailors had held up the image of a saint and prayed to it, the storm were to abate, you would be more sorry for the encouragement of superstition than rejoiced at the preservation of your life; and so would every other man born and bred in Edinburgh.

My views of the matter would be much shorter and coarser: I should be so glad to find myself alive, that I should not care a farthing if the storm had generated a thousand new, and revived as many old saints. How can any man stop in the midst of the stupendous joy of getting rid of Buonaparte, and prophesy a thousand little peddling evils that will result from restoring the Bourbons? The most important of all objects is the independence of Europe: it has been twice very nearly destroyed by the French; it is menaced from no other quarter; the people must be identified with their sovereign. There is no help for it; it will teach them in future to hang kings who set up for conquerors. I will not believe that the Bourbons have no party in France. My only knowledge of politics is from the York paper; yet nothing shall convince me

that the people are not heartily tired of Buonaparte, and ardently wish for the cessation of the conscription; that is, for the Bourbons.

I shall be in my house by the 25th of March, in spite of all the evils that are prophesied against me. I have had eleven fires burning night and day for these two months past.

I am glad to hear that the intention of raising a statue to Playfair and Stewart is now reported to have been only a joke. This is *wut*, not *wit;* by way of pleasantry, the oddest conceit I have heard of; but you gentlemen from the North are, you know, a little singular in your conceptions of the *lepid.* I quoted to Whishaw the behaviour of —— ——, under similar circumstances; I wonder if Stewart and Playfair would have behaved with as much modesty, had this joke dropped down into a matter of fact.

We are all well; but Douglas alarmed us the other night with the croup. I darted into him all the mineral and vegetable resources of the shops,—cravatted his throat with blisters, and fringed it with leeches, and set him in five or six hours to playing marbles, breathing gently and inaudibly.

Pray send me some news when there is any. It is very pleasant in these deserts to see the handwriting of an old friend; it is like the print in the sand seen by Robinson Crusoe.

I am reading Neale's 'History of the Puritans;' read it if you have never read it, and make my Lady read it. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

106.] To John Allen, Esq.

Foston, April, 1814.

Dear Allen,

I write you a short note to thank you sincerely for your friendly advice on going into my house. My great dread is not of damp, but of cold damp; and therefore I trust to excellent fires, to be kept up night and day; and the first week has justified my confidence. I am very much pleased with my house. I aimed at making a snug parsonage, and I think I have succeeded. I hope, one day or other, you will criticize from the spot.

I am sorry to see the war degenerating into a war of dynasties,—the great evil to be dreaded from a weak Administration, and into which they seem to have completely fallen.

I should be very glad to come to town a little this spring, but I am afraid I cannot; I shall however make an effort. I wish you had said a word about Lord and Lady Holland. Pray give to them my best and kindest regards. Yours, etc.,

Sydney Smith.

107.] To Lady Holland.

Foston, June 25th, 1814.

My dear Lady Holland,

I set off on Tuesday morning, and reached home on Wednesday night by ten o'clock, finding everybody very well, and delighting them not a little next day by the display of your French presents; but of this Mrs. Sydney will speak herself.

I liked London better than ever I liked it before, and simply, I believe, from water-drinking. Without this, London is stupefaction and inflammation. It is not the love of wine, but thoughtlessness and unconscious imitation: other men poke out their hands for the revolving wine, and one does the same, without thinking of it. All people above the condition of labourers are ruined by excess of stimulus and nourishment, clergy included. I never yet saw any gentleman who ate and drank as little as was reasonable.

I am uneasy, dear Lady Holland, at your going abroad. Consider what it is to be well. If I were you, I would not stir from Holland House for two years; and then, as many jolts and frights as you please, which at present you are not equal to. I shonld think you less to blame if the world had anything new to show you; but you have seen the Parthian, the Mede, etc. etc. etc.; no variety of garment can surprise you, and the roads upon the earth are as well known to you as the wrinkles in ——'s face.

Be wise, my dear lady, and re-establish your health in that gilded room which furnishes better and pleasanter society than all the wheels in the world can whirl you to. Believe me, dear Lady Holland, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

108.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ. 1814.

My dear Jeffrey,

I am much obliged to you for the Review, and shall exercise the privilege of an old friend in making some

observations upon it. I have not read the review of Wordsworth, because the subject is to me so very uninteresting; but, may I ask, do not such repeated attacks upon a man wear in some little degree the shape of persecution?

Without understanding anything of the subject, I was much pleased with the 'Cassegrainian Telescope,' as it seemed modest, moderate in rebuke, and to have the air of wisdom and erudition. The account of Scotch husbandry is somewhat coxcombical; and has the fault of digressing too much into political economy; but I should guess it to be written by a very good farmer;—I mean, by a man thoroughly acquainted with the method in which the art is carried on. I delight in the article on Carnot; it is virtuous and honourable to do justice to such a man. I should guess that the travels of the Frenchman in England are those of your friend and relation, M. Simond.

With respect to what you say of your occasional feelings of disgust at your office of editor, and half-formed intentions of giving it up, I think you should be slow to give up so much emolument, now that you are married and may have a family; but if you can get as great an income by your profession, and the two cannot be combined, I would rather see you a great lawyer than a witty journalist. There can be no doubt which is the most honourable and lucrative situation, and not much doubt which is the most useful.

It will give us the greatest pleasure to see you in the spring, or, if not then, in your excursion to France. I like my new house very much; it is very comfortable, and, after finishing it, I would not pay sixpence to alter it; but the expense of it will keep me a very

poor man, a close prisoner here for my life, and render the education of my children a difficult exertion for me. My situation is one of great solitude; but I preserve myself in a state of cheerfulness and tolerable content, and have a propensity to amuse myself with trifles. I hope I shall write something before I grow old, but I am not certain whether I am sufficiently industrious.

I shall never apologize to you for egotism; I think very few men, writing to their friends, have enough of it. If Horner were to break fifteen of his ribs, or marry, or resolve to settle in America, he would never mention it to his friends; but would write with the most sincere kindness from Kentucky, to inquire for your welfare, leaving you to marvel as you chose at the post-mark, and to speculate whether it was Kentucky or Kensington.

I think very highly of 'Waverley,' and was inclined to suspect, in reading it, that it was written by Miss Scott of Ancram.

I am truly glad to read of your pleasure from your little girl and your château. The haunts of Happiness are varied, and rather unaccountable; but I have more often seen her among little children, and home firesides, and in country houses, than anywhere else,—at least, I think so. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

109.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

February 1*st*, 1815.

My dear Lady Holland,

Many thanks for your letter. I think you very fortunate in having Rogers at Rome. Show me a more

kind and friendly man; secondly, one, from good manners, knowledge, fun, taste, and observation, more agreeable; thirdly, a man of more strict political integrity, and of better character in private life. If I were to choose any Englishman in foreign parts whom I should wish to blunder upon, it should be Rogers.

Lord —— paid a visit to a family whom he had not visited since the capture of the Bastille, and apologized for not having called before; in the meantime, the estate had passed through two different races.

We have stayed at Castle Howard for two or three days. I found Lord Carlisle very good-natured, and even kind; with considerable talents for society, a very good understanding, and no more visible consequence, as a nobleman, than he had a fair right to assume. Lady Carlisle seems thoroughly amiable. I soon found myself at my ease at Castle Howard, which will make an agreeable variety in my existence. Lord Morpeth and Lady Georgiana called upon us; we have, in short, experienced very great civility from them. Lord and Lady Carlisle called upon us twice, and were overwhelmed in a ploughed field!

SYDNEY SMITH.

110.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, 1815.

Dear Lady Holland,

I thought you would have written me a line upon your first coming, but I thought also you were ill; and as I get older, I make more and more allowance for the omnipotence of indolence, under whose dominion friend, lover, client, patron, satirist, and sycophant so often yield up their respective energies.

I am not always confident of your friendship for me, at particular times; but I have great confidence in it, from one end of the year to another: above all, I am confident that I have a great affection for you.

I hear that Ward is in London. He follows you across Europe, and you him, but you never meet; I suppose your mutual gratification is to be in the same city;—the purest and least sensual passion I ever heard of, and such as I did not suppose to exist but in the books of knights-errant.

SYDNEY SMITH.

111.] To LADY HOLLAND.

No date: about 1815.

I hope the Lady Holland finds herself well, and brings with her a gay and healthy train;—that all are well, from Cleopatra the queen to Antonio the page.

Though I have no great affection for poverty at any time, it is on such occasions as these that I owe it the greatest grudge. If I were a Dean, I certainly would congratulate you in person, and not by letter. I missed you all very much in my last visit to London, which in other respects was a very agreeable one.

I will not say a word about politics, or make the slightest allusion to a small rocky island in the middle of the Atlantic, the final cause of which now seems to be a little clearer; but I may say he gives up too soon,—his resistances are not sufficiently desperate. I may say also, that I admire him for not killing himself, which is, in a soldier, easy, vulgar, and commonly foolish; it shows that he has a strong tendency to hope, or that he has a confidence in his own versatility

of character, and his means of making himself happy by trifling, or by intellectual exertion.

Now pray do settle in England, and remain quiet; depend upon it, it is the most agreeable place. I have heard five hundred travelled people assert that there is no such agreeable house in Europe as Holland House: why should you be the last person to be convinced of this, and the first to make it true?

Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

112.] To LORD HOLLAND.

1815.

My dear Lord Holland,

I am totally unacquainted with the two tutors I recommended to B——, but they were recommended to me from a quarter in which I could perfectly confide. My *desiderata* were, that they should possess a good deal of knowledge, and that they should be virtuous and good-tempered men. B——'s son I understood to be an ordinary young man, and not requiring a person of more than common judgment and dexterity; and therefore as much was proved to me as I required to be proved, before I recommended. I can satisfy you in the same particulars by the same inquiry; but whether the individual asked for may possess the sense, firmness, and judgment necessary to manage such a clever boy as ——, I cannot determine, as I have not sufficient confidence, upon points of this nature, in the person to whom my questions are addressed.

If the Universities were well sifted and swept for you, the best person to get would be a Cambridge

man, or, at least, some man from an English university; but then he would require a great deal of attention, would be troublesome from the jealousy of being slighted, and would be altogether an unpleasant inmate. I therefore put Englishmen out of the question. All things considered, they would not do for you. I look upon Switzerland as an inferior sort of Scotland, and am for a Scotchman. A Scotchman full of knowledge, quiet, humble, assiduous, civil and virtuous, you will easily get; and I will send you such a one per coach, or (which he will like better) per waggon, any day; but will he command the respect of ——? Will he acquire an ascendancy over him? Will he be a man of good sound sense and firmness? Here I cannot help you, because I know nobody *myself;* and, in a recommendation I should have so much at heart, I should choose to judge for myself.

I do not know the name of the ex-tutor, or where he is; but will write tonight, inquire every particular, state generally what is wanted, without mentioning names, and send you the answer.

It will be hardly possible for you and Lady Holland to consent to such a plan; but I should have thought that a tutor with three or four pupils, forty or fifty miles from London, would be the best arrangement. They abound, their characters are accessible, they are near, and among five hundred schoolmasters it may not be impossible to find a man of sense. But perhaps health would be an objection to this; though I must observe that the health of very delicate children very often improves, in proportion as they are removed from the perilous kindness of home.

Mr. —— always seemed to me an excellent and

accomplished, but a very foolish, man. There is very little mother-wit in the world, but a great deal of clergy.

I remain always, my dear Lord Holland, with the most sincere attachment and affection,

SYDNEY SMITH.

113.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Bath, 1816.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have a fancy to know how you do, and what has befallen you since your journey to Foston. I write this from Bath, where I am living, on a visit to my father. I shall not be in London before the month of May; have I any chance of seeing you there?

Lord and Lady Byron are, you know, separated. He said to Rogers, that Lady Byron had parted with him, apparently in good friendship, on a visit to her father, and that he had no idea of their being about to part, when he received her decision to that effect. He stated that his own temper, naturally bad, had been rendered more irritable by the derangement of his fortune—and that Lady Byron was entirely blameless. The truth is, he is a very unprincipled fellow.

Leach will be Chancellor: I had heard last year that he was strongly solicited, by that bribe, to desert his party, and at last I see his virtue has given way. I have heard nothing of ——'s success; but what success can any man obtain,—on what side (Ireland excepted) can the Administration be assailed with any chance of success?

Madame de Staël is at Pisa, attending Rocca, who

is dying. Have you read Stewart's preliminary dissertation? What do you think of it? He is an excellent man. How does Brown's new poem turn out?

I beg, my dear Jeffrey, you will not class me amongst the tribe of irritable correspondents; unless I write to you upon points of business, I hold it to be perfectly fair for you to answer me or not, and that you may keep the most profound silence, "salvâ amicitiâ," but it always gives me sincere pleasure to hear from you. I shall be here till about the 20th. Pray remember me very kindly to Murray and all friends.

SYDNEY SMITH.

114.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, 1816.

Dear Jeffrey,

I should have set off this day for Lord Grey and you, but Douglas was seized with typhus fever, and Mrs. Sydney hurried up to London. He is much better, and will do well if there is no relapse; in the meantime, I am prisoner here, because I must be jailor to my three remaining children. I was a good deal suprised to see in the 'Times' a part of my review on the Abbé Georgel quoted before the Review is published; is this quite right on the part of Constable? I am truly sorry to lose my visit to you, and the more so, because I know you are not quite well. Pray say how that is, and promise me amendment in this respect.

I have two short reviews to write of two French books,—Madame d'Epinay and Madame de Genlis, and then I am at a loss for a subject. The trial of Horne

I relinquished on account of the invincible candour of my nature. Pray answer all my queries distinctly; and how happy should I be if you would dictate your letters, and not write them yourself! I can scarcely ever read them.

I have just now received your letter, and am truly afflicted to receive so melancholy an account of your health; and the more so, as I had not a suspicion, before Murray's letter, that you were at all ill. For God's sake be wise and obedient and meek to your bloody butchers, and let me hear from you very soon. I have a letter from Mrs. Sydney this morning; Douglas very weak, and I hardly think will remain in London.

SYDNEY SMITH.

115.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

February 2nd, 1816.

My dear Lady Holland,

My father seems to bear his great misfortune with equanimity. He is as well as he was fifteen years ago, and as young, at the nominal age of seventy-six. My sister was a most amiable and enlightened woman; she had run through all the stamina of constitution nature had allotted her, and died of old-age, in youth. The loss of a person whom I would have cultivated as a friend, if nature had not given her to me as a relation, is a serious evil.

I thank you most sincerely for your very handsome and delightful present, of Madame de Sévigné, which will beguile many a Yorkshire hour.

SYDNEY SMITH.

116.] To Lord Holland.

August, 1816.

Dear Lord Holland,

I can buy you some sheep by means of the agent I employ for myself; but, then, there is a history to tell. I live only "from hand to mouth" (as the common people say), and for weeks together I am not master of ten pounds, nor do I know where to get as much; therefore you must give me a power of drawing on your bankers for any sum not exceeding ninety pounds, which will more than cover every possible expense, though I hope they will be bought much more advantageously. You will, I am sure, excuse my frankness; but it may very possibly happen, when the time comes for buying the sheep, that I may be entirely without money. I will write to Johnson; but I think the better way would be, to send them at once to Holland House. God bless you!

Sydney Smith.

117.] To the Countess Grey.

York, Nov. 3rd, 1816.

If you and Lord Grey will consider yourselves as solemnly pledged to me not to reveal the contents of the enclosed note, open it, and you will read a marriage which will make you laugh. If you cannot give that pledge, fling it into the fire. I am quite serious in exacting the pledge, and as serious in assuring you, dear Lady Grey, of my great regard and respect.

Sydney Smith.

[*Enclosed Note.*]

Sorry to treat with apparent harshness one whom I so much respect, but cannot grant your Ladyship the slightest indulgence. On the contrary, must prohibit, in the severest manner, the disclosure of the secret, either to aliens or your own blood.

Though necessity compels me to this rigour, I feel for your situation, and am not without fears for your health; you should avoid meat and wine, and live with the greatest care, till relief can be gained by disclosure. I assure you that the information is no joke on my part. I sincerely believe it myself, for it comes to me from a source that I must consider to be unquestionable. I remain, dear Lady Grey, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

118.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

November 8th, 1816.

My dear Lady Holland,

I found and left Lord Grey in very good health. He is extremely pleased with the match, and most probably rightly pleased. We had, at Howick, Sir —— ——, with whom I was much taken; quick, shrewd, original, well-informed, eccentric, paradoxical, and contradictory.

It is not possible to speak of Horner! I have a most sincere affection for him.

I found everywhere in Northumberland and Scotland wretched crops, failing tenants, and distressed landlords (*unlike Atlas*), bending down with the weight of land suddenly flung upon their shoulders.

Lord Morpeth called here the other day. I esteem myself most fortunate in being near so excellent and enlightened a man, and will cultivate him as much as he will let me. I am concerned to hear of Lord Holland's gout. I observe that gout loves ancestors and genealogy; it needs five or six generations of gentlemen or noblemen to give it its full vigour. Allen deserves the gout more than Lord Holland. I have seen the latter personage resorting occasionally to plain dishes, but Allen passionately loves complexity and artifice in his food.

I suppose Samuel Rogers is mortgaged to your Ladyship for the autumn and the early part of the winter. Perhaps you would have the goodness to say, that Miss —— thinks him charming! Next to the Congreve rocket, he is the most mischievous and powerful of modern inventions.

I have now read three volumes of Madame de Sévigné, with a conviction that her letters are very much over-praised. Mr. Thomas Grenville says he has made seven vigorous attacks upon Madame de Sévigné, and has been as often repulsed. I presume you have read 'Rhoda;' if not, read it, at my peril. I was pestered into reading it, and felt myself very much obliged to my persecutors.

I think of my visit to Holland House last summer with the greatest pleasure, and hope to renew it again this year, if I am rich enough. I promise to be agreeable.

Always your grateful and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

119.] To Lady Holland.

Foston, Nov. 16th, 1816.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am as sensible of the advantages of bringing my children to London as any one can be. I like to be there myself, and nobody enjoys more sincerely the society of friends; but the duties of economy are paramount. Such slender means as mine admit of no imprudence and no excess.

Yours, dear Lady Holland, most truly,

Sydney Smith.

120.] To Francis Horner, Esq.

Foston, Nov. 25th, 1816.

My dear Horner,

Since I saw you, I have paid a visit to Lord Grey. I met there Lambton, the about-to-be son-in-law; a clever person. To him add Sir —— ——, and Sir —— ——, with whom I was very much pleased. I have seldom seen a more original or a quicker man; eccentric, and affecting to be more so than he is, as is the case commonly with eccentric persons. From Lord Grey's I went to visit ——, whom I found unchanged, except that they are become a little more Methodistical. I endeavour in vain to give them more cheerful ideas of religion; to teach them that God is not a jealous, childish, merciless tyrant; that he is best served by a regular tenour of good actions,—not by bad singing, ill-composed prayers, and eternal apprehensions. But the luxury of false religion is, to be unhappy!

I went in quest of schools for Douglas. At Ripon I found an insignificant man, in melancholy premises, and boys two in a bed. At Richmond I was extremely pleased with Mr. Tate, who takes thirty boys, and appears to be a very enlightened man. Westminster costs about £150 or £200 per annum. I have little to do, and am extremely poor. Why not keep Douglas at home till he is sixteen, send him for three years to Mr. Tate, then to Cambridge? I cannot think that his moral or literary improvement will be less; at the same time, if it were my duty to make the sacrifice, of course, *I would* make it, but, after all the attention I can give to it, I cannot discover a better plan, even if I had £10,000 per annum; of course it is taken for granted that I am able to teach him well, and that I shall stick to my duty.*

It gives us the greatest pleasure to find you have got so far so well. Our kindest affections and warmest good wishes move on with you, and hang like a dew on the glasses of your carriage. God bless you, my dear Horner!

SYDNEY SMITH.

121.] To FRANCIS HORNER, ESQ.

Foston, 1816.

My dear Horner,

We are tolerably well pleased with the account you give of yourself. It would have been unreasonable to expect that you could gain anything during the fatigue of travelling; it is much that you have not lost. Now is your beginning! I hope you will have the

* Mr. Horner was Douglas's godfather.

resolution to withstand the importunities of friends, and hermetically to seal yourself. Dear little F—— A—— has the best heart in the world, but you must not let her excite you to much talking. If —— were at Pisa, you would of course order horses.

I have just read Dugald Stewart's 'Preliminary Dissertations.' In the first place, it is totally clear of all his defects. No insane dread of misrepresentation; no discussion put off till another time, just at the moment it was expected, and would have been interesting; no unmanly timidity; less formality of style and cathedral pomp of sentence. The good, it would be trite to enumerate:—the love of human happiness and virtue, the ardour for the extension of knowledge, the command of fine language, happiness of allusion, varied and pleasing literature, tact, wisdom, and moderation! Without these high qualities, we all know Stewart cannot write. I suspect he has misrepresented Horne Tooke, and his silence respecting Hartley is very censurable. I was amazingly pleased with his comparison of the Universities to enormous hulks confined with mooring-chains, everything flowing and progressing around them. Nothing can be more happy.

I speak of books as I read them, and I read them as I can get them. You are read up to twelve o'clock of the preceding day, and therefore must pardon the staleness of my subjects. I read yesterday the evidence of the Elgin Marble Committee. Lord Elgin has done a very useful thing in taking them away from the Turks. Do not throw pearls to swine; and take them away from swine when they are so thrown. They would have been destroyed there, or the French

would have had them. He is underpaid for them. Flaxman's evidence (some little ostentation excepted) is very ingenious. Payne Knight makes a very poor figure;—unshaken confidence, upon the most scanty foundations.

We are all perfectly well. Corn is rather bad than dear, but makes good unleavened bread; and the poor, I find, seldom make any other than unleavened bread, even in the best seasons. I have seen nobody, and heard from nobody, since I last wrote. Seven years' absence from London is too severe a trial for correspondents. Even Astrea Whishaw has given way.

I remain always your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

122.] To LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, November, 1816.

Dear Lady Mary,

I have not written to you, because I have been very busy; but I always felt that I ought, and that I wished, to write to you.

We pressed —— to stay longer, but she is a great politician, and has some mysterious reasons for returning, which I could not fathom, though I let down my deep-sea line; probably they are connected with the present precarious state of the Bourbons, and the lingering and protracted war carried on in the Spanish colonies. The natives admired her eyes very much, and said they were very different from Yorkshire eyes. They indeed express every soft and amiable virtue, with just as much of wickedness as is necessary to prevent insipidity.

I ought to apologize to you for not having said anything of the Princess. Youth and fertility quenched by death is a melancholy event, let the rank of the victim be what it may; but her death is not of any *political* importance; the root remains deep in the earth, and it matters not which becomes the leading shoot.

I shall bring up your friend Douglas to Westminster after Easter, when I hope, my dear little friend, to see you in town. I shall have a mean idea of your powers, if, between coaxing, scolding, plaguing, and reasoning, you cannot make Lord Tankerville take a house.

I always tell you all the books worth notice that I read, and I rather counsel you to read Jacob's 'Spain,' a book with some good sense in it, and not unentertaining; also, by all means, the first volume of Franklin's Letters. I will disinherit you if you do not admire everything written by Franklin. In addition to all other good qualities, he was thoroughly honest.

We have had Sir Humphry Davy here. A spurious Aladdin has sprung up in Northumberland, and pretends that the magical lamp belongs to him. There is no end to human presumption and arrogance,—though nobody has as yet pretended to be Lady Mary Bennett.

SYDNEY SMITH.

123.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Sedgeley, Jan. 6th, 1817.

Dear Lady Mary Bennett,

I think it was rather bad taste on my part to speak

of the Princess as a royal person, when you were lamenting her loss as an acquaintance; but I am very jealous of the monarchical feelings of this country.

I do not know whether you are acquainted with the Philips with whom I am now staying; he is very rich, the discoverer of cotton, and an old friend of mine. I am going to preach a charity sermon next Sunday. I desire to make three or four hundred weavers cry, which it is impossible to do since the late rise in cottons.

And now, dear Lady Mary, do you want anything in the flowered cotton, or Manchester velvet, or chintz line? Remember, this is not a town where there are only a few shops, but it is the great magazine from which flow all the mercers' shops in the known world. Here tabbies and tabinets are first concocted! Here muslin—elementary, rudimental, early, primeval muslin—is meditated; broad and narrow sarsnet first see the light, and narrow and broad edging! Avail yourself, dear lady, of my being here, to prepare your conquering armour for your next campaign.

I shall be in town by the end of March, and shall have real pleasure in seeing you. I think you begin to feel at ease in my company: certainly, you were much improved in that particular the last time we met. God bless you! I admire you very much, and praise you often.

SYDNEY SMITH.

124.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

March 13th, 1817.

My dear Lord Holland,

Nobody, I assure you, is more desirous of living

at ease than I am; but I should prefer the approbation of such men as the Duke of Bedford and yourself, to the most unwieldy bishopric obtained by means you would condemn and despise. Doubtless, when you think of that amorous and herbivorous parish of Covent Garden, and compare it with my agricultural benefice, you will say, "Better is the dinner of herbs where love is, than the stalled ox," etc. etc. Be this as it may, my best thanks are due to you for your kind exertions in my favour; but you and Lady Holland are full of kindness to me on all occasions: you know how sincerely I am attached to you both.

I entirely agree to, and sympathize with, your opposition to the suspension: nothing can be more childish and more mischievous. Christianity in danger of being written down by doggrel rhymes! England about to be divided into little parcels, like a chessboard! The flower and chivalry of the realm flying before one armed apothecary!

How can old Mother G—— and Mother F—— swallow such trash as this?

I say nothing of the great and miserable loss we have all sustained. He will always live in our recollection; and it will be useful to us all, in the great occasions of life, to reflect how Horner would act and think in them, if God had prolonged his life.

Ever, my dear Lord Holland, most truly and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

125.] To JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

March 26th, 1817.

My dear Whishaw,

It will give us the most sincere pleasure to see you here, if it is in your power to reach us. Let us detain you (if you do come) as long as your other avocations will permit.

I am not without hopes of being in town, but do not like leaving the country without collecting the little rents that are due to me; indeed, if I omitted that ceremony before leaving my friends, I most probably should never see them again. Lord Holland has told you the danger I was exposed to, of becoming rector of Covent Garden, of hortescortical notoriety. I think this is placing a clergyman in the van of the battle.

I had a letter yesterday from Philips; he begins to tremble for Manchester. In this part of the country, there is not the slightest degree of distress among the poor. Everybody is employed, and at fair wages; but we are purely agricultural. I was surprised to find Bobus among the anti-alarmists; he does not always keep such good company.

We saw Jeffrey on his way down. I should be glad to know whether he made a good figure in the House of Lords, and produced any effect. I had not seen him for some time, and found him improved in manner; in essentials he cannot improve.

Ever, dear Whishaw, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

126.] To George Philips, Esq., M.P.

Foston, July 25th, 1817.

My dear Philips,

Your letter gave Mrs. Sydney and me great pleasure. Once out of London you will rapidly recover;—and here, my dear Philips, let me warn you against the melancholy effects of temperance. You will do me the justice to remember how often I have entered my protest against it: depend upon it, the wretchedness of human life is only to be encountered upon the basis of meat and wine.

Poor Ponsonby is numbered with the just. I had a letter last week from Lord Grey, lamenting his loss in very feeling terms.

Brougham is here, that is, at York. Scarlett is detained in town, and does not come for the first week. I hope you are pleased with the spirit of the magistrates. Lord —— has lived long among them, and they knew him to be a fool; this is a great advantage. At this distance from London no magistrate believes that a Secretary of State *can* be a fool. I am much pleased with the St. Helena manuscript,—it seems smartly written, and full of good sense; it is a very good imitation of what Buonaparte might have said.

It will give us great pleasure to come to you this year. I hope nothing will happen to prevent it; though it commonly happens, when a person is just going to set out for any place where he wishes to go, that he falls down and breaks his leg in two places; or, having arrived, is seized with a scarlet fever; or is forced to return, hearing that his son's eye is knocked out by a cricket-ball.

I sincerely hope, my dear Philips, that you are recovering your strength rapidly, and that, in the enjoyment of your pretty place, you will forget your past severe sufferings. Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

127.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

July 31*st*, 1817.

My dear Lady Holland,

I write to you from Scarborough, with a clear view of the Hague and Amsterdam.

It is very curious to consider in what manner Horner gained, in so extraordinary a degree, the affections of such a number of persons of both sexes,—all ages, parties, and ranks in society; for he was not remarkably good-tempered, nor particularly lively and agreeable; and an inflexible politician on the unpopular side. The causes are, his high character for probity, honour, and talents; his fine countenance; the benevolent interest he took in the concerns of all his friends; his simple and gentlemanlike manners; his untimely death.

SYDNEY SMITH.

128.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Scarborough, August 15*th*, 1817.

My dear Sir,

I received your note at Scarborough, where I am with my brother, his family, and my father. From

this place they all go to my house at Foston, and there they must be packed by ——'s condensing machine. Under these circumstances, it will be quite impossible to enjoy the pleasure of your company. Some other time I hope I shall be more fortunate. I am truly obliged to you for your friendly intention and recollection of my invitation.

Our friend Philips is getting much better, and is making very laudable resolutions of intemper nce, having been very much blamed by Baillie for his abstemious habits.

I remain, dear Davenport, sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

129.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Foston, York, Oct. 3rd, 1817.

My dear Murray,

Nothing can be more unjust and natural than the conduct of parents in placing their children. They have recourse to ten thousand advisers, and appeal to each as if their whole confidence were placed in him. Somebody has now advised Mr. B—— that Mr. —— is the best tutor in Edinburgh; and to Mr. ——, I presume, his son will go. I am extremely sorry for all the trouble I have given you, but as my residence in Scotland is so well known, appeals to me are made from intimate friends; and what can I do? The same thing may happen to you about English schools, and then you may take your revenge upon me.

If ever you find yourself in an idle mood, I wish you would send me an accurate account of what is done in the High School at Edinburgh. Jeffrey descanted

upon that subject: but, with all my love and respect for him, I found it quite impossible to believe, though I acquitted him, of course, of any intentional misrepresentation; but every young gentleman of twelve years of age appeared far superior to Henry Stephens or his footman Scapula.

Jeffrey has thrashed —— happily and deservedly; —but is it not time now to lay up his cudgel? Heads that are plastered and trepanned all over are no longer fit for breaking.

M——, I see, retires from his present situation, to sit in judgment upon the lives and properties of his fellow-creatures. When a man is a fool, in England we only trust him with the immortal concerns of human beings.

Believe me, ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

130.] To LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

The drawings, dear Lady, are not yet arrived, though I dare say they are on the road. We have one drawing of yours in our drawing-room, and shall be delighted to multiply such ornaments, for their own merit, and for the recollections they excite.

My sermon is on the road, with other heavy baggage. I will read it when it comes; and if what I have said of Mrs. Fry is worth extracting, I shall be happy to send it to you: but I am a rough writer of sermons, thinking less care necessary for that which is spoken, than that which is written; or rather, I should

say, for that which is written to *be* spoken, than that which is written to be read.

Poor Bobus has, as you see, lost his election; a trick played upon him by that extraordinary person who looks over Lincoln, and who, looking, saw that he had not his clerical brother with him, and so watched his opportunity to do him a mischief.

I am heartily glad to see the elections take so favourable a turn. The people are all mad; what can they possibly mean by being so wise and so reasonable?

I recommend you to read the first and second volumes of the four volumes of the Abbé Georgel's Memoirs. You will suppose, from this advice, that there is something improper in the third and fourth: but, to spare you the trouble of beginning with them, I assure you I only exclude them from my recommendation because they are dull. You will see, in the second volume, a detailed account of the celebrated Necklace Story, which regaled your papa and mamma before you were born,—an event, by the bye, for which I always feel myself much indebted to Lord and Lady Tankerville. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

131.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, 1817.

Dear Lady Mary,

There never was better venison, or venison treated with more respect and attention. Chillingham is a place of the greatest merit.

I envy Brougham his trip to Paris. There is no-

thing (except the pleasure of seeing you) I long for so much as to see Paris, and I pray my life may be spared for this great purpose, or rather these great purposes. Easter will do for the first, as I shall be in town about that time. My brother and his family quit us on Monday for Bowood. A house emptied of its guests is always melancholy for the first three or four days. Their loss will be supplied by Sir Humphry and Lady Davy, who are about to pay us a visit next week.

I have not framed your drawing yet, because I want another to accompany it, and then they shall both go up together. I do not know whether this is *exigeant* or not; but I have so great an idea of your fertility in these matters, that I consider a drawing to be no more to you than an epic poem to Coleridge, or a prison and police bill to some of your relations.

SYDNEY SMITH.

132.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

My dear Friend,

I sent you hasty notice, two or three days ago, that your pretty and elegant drawings had arrived. They are hung up, and give me a ray of cheerfulness and satisfaction whenever I look upon them.

Lord Tankerville is very kind to me, and I am much flattered by his attention. I will write to Mr. Bailey on the very interesting subject of venison,—a subject which is deemed amongst the clergy a professional one.

I hardly know *any man* who deserves *any woman*;

therefore I shall think —— unequally married if she marries ——. It is a common, every-day sort of match; and she will be occupied, as usual, by the rapid succession of Tom, Peter, Harry, Susan, Daniel, Caroline, Elizabeth, Jemima, Duodecimus, and Tridecimus.

There is a great difference of opinion about Scott's new novel. At Holland House it is much run down: I dare not oppose my opinion to such an assay or proof-house; but it made me cry and laugh very often, and I was very sorry when it was over, and so I cannot in justice call it dull.

The few words I said of Mrs. Fry (whom God bless, as well as you!) were these:—

"There is a spectacle which this town now exhibits, that I will venture to call the most solemn, the most Christian, the most affecting, which any human being ever witnessed! To see that holy woman in the midst of wretched prisoners,—to see them calling earnestly upon God, soothed by her voice, animated by her look, clinging to the hem of her garment, and worshiping her as the only human being who has ever loved them, or taught them, or noticed them, or spoken to them of God!—this is the sight which breaks down the pageantry of the world,—which tells us that the short hour of life is passing away, and that we must prepare by some good deeds to meet God; that it is time to give, to pray, to comfort,—to go, like this blessed woman, and do the work of our heavenly Saviour, Jesus, among the guilty, among the broken-hearted, and the sick; and to labour in the deepest and darkest wretchedness of life!" God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

133.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

December 22nd, 1817.

Dear Lady Grey,

I am afraid you will laugh the flower-garden to scorn; and yet the living pattern is the prettiest thing of the kind I ever saw. I cannot see why you should disdain formal and regular shapes. In small spaces of ground contiguous to your house, and with the blooming midsummer blaze of flowers, they are surely very pretty. And in this mode were these gardens first brought over to us from Holland and France.

I journeyed on to York with very little *ennui*. As long as the coach is in Northumberland, I think the conversation turns upon the Duke of Northumberland and Lord Grey. A fat lady in the corner was very partial to the latter; a merchant from Newcastle did not like his principles;—"All the Greys are passionate, but it is soon over;" "Sir Harry shot an eagle;" "Lord Grey can spend thirty thousand a year, clear," etc. etc.

I found everybody very well at my home, and various schemes laid for Christmas feasts, in which, as you may suppose, I shall be aiding and abetting. I am very much obliged to you and Lord Grey for your kindness during my stay with you. Amid your lords and dukes, pray keep a bit, however small, in your recollection for me.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Ever, with sincere respect and regard, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

134.] To Lady Holland.

No date.

My dear Lady Holland,

I was very glad to hear you were so well as to despise the south of France, and remain at Paris.

The Duke of Devonshire told me everything would go on as usual at Castle Howard. Lord Morpeth is very much liked wherever he has presented himself, and appears to be sure of his election. The Protestants are very angry that four Papists should be elected, but they have not as yet brought forward any Martin Luther against us.

Little Du Cane has been here,—a very amiable, pleasing person. I shall ask —— for his defects; they are not apparent at a first acquaintance. Lord —— (innocent lamb!) has been distributing cake and wine to the little children of ——, and presiding at the Bible Society. If he take to benevolence, he will be the happier for it.

Have you read 'Matilda'? If you have, will you not tell me what you think of it? You are as cautious as Whishaw. I mentioned to Lord Normanby that it was the book selected as a victim for the next number of the Edinburgh Review, and that my brethren had complimented me with the knife. Lady Normanby gave a loud shriek!

All the branches of the Howards are at Castle Howard. The music went off very well; £20,500 was collected. I did not go once. Music for such a length of time (unless under sentence of a jury) I will not submit to. What pleasure is there in pleasure, if quantity is not attended to, as well as quality?

I know nothing more agreeable than a dinner at Holland House; but it must not begin at ten in the morning, and last till six. I should be incapable for the last four hours of laughing at Lord Holland's jokes, eating Raffaelle's cakes, or repelling Mr. Allen's attacks upon the Church.

SYDNEY SMITH.

135.] TO JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

January 7th, 1818.

My dear Whishaw,

We have been here* for a fortnight, and stay till the 21st. The company who come here are chiefly *philosophical*, as there is an immense colony of that name in these parts; they seem all good-natured, worthy people, and many of them in the Whig line. In these days, too, everybody reads a little; and there is more variety and information in every class than there was fifty years ago. About the year 1740, a manufacturer of long ells or twilled fustians must have been rather a coarse-grained fellow. It is not among gentlemen of that description I would at present look for all that is delightful in manner and conversation, but they certainly run finer than they did, and are (to use their own phrase) a superior article.

The acquittal of Hone gave me sincere pleasure, because I believe it proceeded, in some measure, from the horror and disgust which the *excessive* punishments for libel have excited; and if jurymen take this mode of expressing their disgust, judges will be more moderate. It is a rebuke also upon the very offen-

* The name of the place is not given in the MS.—ED.

sive and scandalous zeal of ——, and teaches juries their strength and importance. In short, Church and King in moderation are very good things, but we have too much of both. I presume by this time your grief at the death of the Princess is somewhat abated. Death in the midst of youth is always melancholy, but I cannot think it of political importance.

I am very glad the —— have sent their son from home; he is a very unusual boy, and he wanted to be exposed a little more to the open air of the world.

Poor Mackintosh! I am heartily sorry for him; but his situation at Hertford will suit him very well (pelting and contusions always excepted).* He should stipulate for "pebble money," as it is technically termed, or an annual pension in case he is disabled by the pelting of the students. By the bye, might it not be advisable for the professors to learn the use of the sling (*balearis habena*)?—it would give them a great advantage over the students.

We are all perfectly well, with the usual January exceptions of colds, sore throats, rheumatism, and hoarseness. I shall be in London in March, but pray write to me before if you have any leisure.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

136.] To LADY HOLLAND.

February 6th, 1818.

My dear Lady Holland,

I cannot be insensible to the loss of so sensible and

* Alluding to the frequent insurrections that used formerly to take place amongst the students at Hayleybury College.

so agreeable a man as Lord Ossory, and of one so nearly related to Lord Holland; but I know nothing which, for a long time, has made me so truly happy as to hear of your accession of fortune, which I did this day from Lord Carlisle. I gave three loud huzzas in Lord Cawdor's dressing-room; making more noise in a minute than the accumulated sounds in Castle Howard would amount to in a whole year. God send you health and long life, to enjoy it!

SYDNEY SMITH.

137.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, February, 1818.

Dear Lady Mary,

I have, for many weighty reasons, put off my coming to town till the middle of May; therefore, pray do not destroy yourself with dissipation between this period and that, so that there may remain a small portion of you for your lately-arriving country friends.

I never knew anything more horrible than the death of poor Croft: what misery the poor fellow must have suffered between the Princess's death and his own!

I hope you are as much rejoiced as it behoves all good people to be, at the increase of fortune which has accrued to Lord Holland. Lord Ossory seems to have enjoyed as much happiness as falls to the lot of human beings,—a good fortune, rank, excellent sense and health, a love of knowledge, long life, and equable temper. May all this be your lot!

You said there was a young —— to appear soon; where is it? What do you think of Publicola Pym Hampden Runnymede ——, for a name?

I am losing my life and time in thinking and talking of bulls, cows, horses, and sheep; and, with my time, my money also. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

138.] TO LADY DAVY.

Foston, April 8th, 1818.

My dear Lady Davy,

Infinitely gratified, that you, who live in the most intellectual spot of the most intellectual place in the world, should think and ask when a Yorkshire parson comes to town. My Lord, the Thane of Cawdor, is pleased to disport himself sometimes with the country clergy; yet, by the grace of God, they will be equal with him when they come to London.

I am astonished that a woman of your sense should yield to such an imposture as the Augsburg Alps;—surely you have found out, by this time, that God has made nothing so curious as human creatures. Deucalion and Pyrrha acted with more wisdom than Sir Humphry and you; for being in the Augsburg Alps, and meeting with a number of specimens, they tossed them over their heads and turned them into men and women. You, on the contrary, are flinging away your animated beings for quartz and feldspar.

The Hollands wrote with great pleasure of a dinner you gave them; and certainly you do keep *one* of the most agreeable houses, if not *the* most agreeable house, in London. Ali Pasha Luttrell, Prince of the Albanians, allows this.

I am impatient to see you, and am always pleased and flattered when I find the Lethean lemonade of

London does not banish me from your recollections. Mrs. Sydney unites with me in kind regards to Sir Humphry.

Ever, dear Lady Davy, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

139.] To JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

Foston, April 13th, 1818.

My dear Whishaw,

I am very much obliged to you for your kind offer; I have however made numerous inquiries, and believe I am tolerably well instructed in the ways of Westminster school. If any of your friends have a son at Westminster, who is a boy of conduct and parts, I should be much obliged to you to recommend Douglas* to his protection; he has never been at school, and the change is greater perhaps than any other he will experience in his future life.

My astonishment was very great at reading Canning's challenge to the anonymous pamphleteer. If it were the first proof of the kind, it would be sufficient to create a general distrust of his sense, prudence, and capacity for action. What sympathy can a wit by profession, a provoker and a discoverer of other men's weaknesses, expect for his literary woes? What does a politician know of his trade, when twenty years have not made him pamphlet-proof? I cannot form a guess who has written a pamphlet that could provoke Canning to such a reply: I should scarcely suppose any producible person; but I have not read it, and am therefore talking at random.

* Mr. Smith's eldest son.

Our excellent friend —— appears to have been somewhat hasty upon the subject of the spy in the one-horse chair, drawn by the warrior; but his conduct was very manly and respectable, in advocating the cause of the poor democrats, who by their knavery and folly are very contemptible, but are not therefore to be abandoned to their oppressors. I have been fighting up against agricultural difficulties, and endeavouring to do well what I am compelled to do; but I believe the first receipt to farm well is, to be rich.

Soon after the 12th of May I hope to see you, and shall be happy to converse with you upon the subject of our poor friend's papers; though the general leaning of my mind is to have his fame where it now stands, upon its political base.

Hertford College is really a paradox.

Of Hallam's labour and accuracy I have no doubt; I like and respect him as much as you do; his success will please me very much.

I remain, my dear Whishaw, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

140.] TO LADY DAVY.

[Note.] *Holland House.*

* * * * *

You are of an ardent mind, and overlook the difficulties and embarrassments of life. Luttrell, before I taught him better, imagined muffins grew! He was wholly ignorant of all the intermediate processes of sowing, reaping, grinding, kneading, and baking. Now you require a *prompt* answer; but mark the

difficulties: your note comes to Weymouth-street, where I am *not;* then by the post to Holland House, where, as I am not a marquis, and have no servant, it is tossed on the porter's table; and when found and answered, will creep into the post late this evening, if the postman is no more drunk than common.

Pray allow for these distressing embarrassments, with which human intercourse is afflicted; and believe how happy I shall be to wait on you the 22nd, being always, my dear Lady Davy, sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

141.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

1818.

My dear Jeffrey,

I am truly obliged by your kindness in inviting Mrs. Sydney and me to come and see you. I know nothing that would give us more pleasure; but poverty, agriculture, children, clerical confinement, all conspire to put such a pleasure out of my reach. The only holiday I get in the year carries me naturally towards London, to meet my father and brother; however, I will not despair. I mention these things explicitly now, that there may be no occasion to trouble you any more; and this, I dare say you will agree with me, is the better plan.

I must however beg the favour of you to be explicit on one point. Do you mean to take care that the Review shall not profess or encourage infidel principles? Unless this is the case, I must absolutely give up all thoughts of connecting myself with it.

Is it the custom in the Review to translate French extracts? I believe not.

I have received, and nearly read, Georgel.

Ever, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

142.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, July 16th, 1818.

My dear Allen,

I have read Georgel, and must say I have seldom read a more stupid book. The first volume, in which he relates what he had seen and observed himself, is well enough; but the three last are no more than a mere newspaper collection of the proceedings; lamentations over the wickedness of the Revolution, and common parsonic notions of the right of kings.* Does the book strike you in any other point of view? Such as it is, I shall write a review of it, and I should be obliged to you to tell me if you think my opinion just.

Is his explanation of the story of the necklace to be credited? Could a man of the Cardinal's rank, who had filled the situation of Ambassador at the Court of Vienna, be the dupe of such a woman as Madame La Motte? or was he the rogue? or was he the dupe? and La Motte the agent of the Queen? If this is not the true version, where is the true version to be found? Is there any new information respecting the French Revolution in Georgel? there seems none such to me. Pray recommend me some new books as soon as you can. Brougham seems to have made a very respectable appearance in point of numbers.

The springs and the fountains are all dried up, and

the land and the cattle are drinking ale and porter. But nothing signifies when the Whigs are so successful. Kind regards. Ever yours, dear Allen, most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

143.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, August 9th, 1818.

My dear Friend,

I will tell you my opinion about Hone and his prosecution, and then you shall do just as you like in allotting the book to, or withholding it from, me.

I think the Administration did perfectly right in prosecuting him; for he either intended to bring the religion of his country into ridicule with the common people, or was blamably careless in not guarding against that consequence; but the punishments of libel are so atrocious and severe, that I almost doubt whether his total acquittal is not better than the establishment of his guilt would have been, followed by that enormous and disproportionate punishment which awaited it. Lord Ellenborough's conduct was very absurd; and it was tyrannical and oppressive to prosecute the man three times. I have the same opinion which everybody else has of the bravery and talent exemplified in his defence; and his trial is rendered memorable by the improved method of striking a jury.

These are the outlines of my opinions on the subject, and I shall most cheerfully acquiesce in your sentence of Yes or No.

I had no idea of writing anything very new upon the subject of the Poor Laws, but something short and

readable, which Chalmers has *not* done, for it is not possible to read his dissertation; but there may be some fear of clashing with him, and therefore perhaps I had better avoid the subject. I would not, of course, interfere with any subject you had intended to treat.

I will bore you as little with questions about the Review as possible; but do not think it necessary, in writing an answer, when you happen to be busy, to write more than a mere reply to the question.

We are just beginning our harvest here,—a very indifferent one; and water is not to be had for love or money. Ever, my dear Jeffrey, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

144.] TO THE EARL GREY.

York, August 24th, 1818.

Dear Lord Grey,

I am very desirous to hear what your vote is about Walter Scott. I think it excellent,—quite as good as any of his novels, excepting that in which Claverhouse is introduced, and of which I forget the name. I read it with the liveliest interest; he repeats his characters, but it seems they will bear repetition. I have heard no votes, but those of Lord and Lady Holland and John Allen against, and Lord and Lady Lansdowne for, the book.

I congratulate you on the general turn of the elections, and the serious accession of strength to the Whigs.

Brougham seems to have made an excellent stand against the Lonsdales; and if Lord Thanet will back him again, he will probably carry his point. The To-

ries here are by no means satisfied with ——, who is subjected to vacillations between right and wrong. They want a man steadily base, who may be depended upon for want of principle. I think on these points Mr. —— might satisfy any reasonable man; but they are exorbitant in their demands.

We conquered here the whooping-cough with a pennyworth of salt of tartar, after having filled them with the expensive poisons of Halford. What an odd thing that such a specific should not be more known!

Adieu, my dear Lord! Ever yours, with sincere attachment and respect,

SYDNEY SMITH.

145.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, August 28th, 1818.

My dear Allen,

I have long since despatched my review of Georgel to Jeffrey. It is ten years since there has been any account in the Edinburgh Review of Botany Bay; I have a fancy to give an account of the progress of the colony since that time; do you know any books to have recourse to? There is a Report of the House of Commons, which must throw some light on the present state of the colony, and there are, above all, if I could get at them, the Botany Bay and Van Diemen's Land newspapers. Do you know Manne's book, 1811? Do you know anything else in any other books capable of throwing light upon the subject?

There is a Mr. Stewart in Edinburgh, a Scotch clergyman, who is said to be eminently successful in the cure of phthisis when somewhat advanced; have you

heard anything about him, or his practice? Do you believe in the report? Will you write immediately to John Thompson, to know what is his opinion of Stewart and his practice? The anecdotes I have heard are very numerous and very strong.

The harvest is finished here, and is not more than two-thirds of an average crop; potatoes have entirely failed; there is no hay; and it will be a year of great scarcity.

I cannot at all agree about Walter Scott; it is a novel full of power and interest; he repeats his characters, but they will bear repetition. Who can read the novel without laughing and crying twenty times? What other proof is needed?

Lord Tankerville has sent me a whole buck; this necessarily takes up a good deal of my time. Lord Carlisle gets stronger and healthier every time I see him. Morpeth is arrived at Castle Howard with the Duke of Rutland.

What matchless impudence, to place the two —— in the frontispiece of the Education Committee!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

146.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, September 15th, 1818.

Dear Allen,

I am exceedingly obliged by your kindness in procuring for me the Botany Bay Gazettes, but I have just received a letter from Longman saying, he shall be able to procure them: as it is better therefore to employ one who has a pecuniary interest in being

civil, than a person who has merely a moral interest, I hasten to save trouble to Mr. Plumer, who probably after all is taking none; but still, having said he would take trouble, the obligation is the same.

Thompson* is above all jealousy, and therefore phthisis remains as incurable as it always has been; still the day *may* come—*will* come, when that complaint will be reduced to utter insignificance by some silly weed on which we now trample every day, not knowing its power to prevent the greatest human afflictions.

I should very much have liked a collection of letters of Madame d'Epinayand her friends, after her return from Geneva, and her friendship established with Diderot. Grimm is an excellent person, not unlike Whishaw, except as he is the object of a tender passion to a beautiful woman.

I question much whether Lady Holland has seen a real country squire, or if they grow at all within that distance of London.

SYDNEY SMITH.

147.] TO THE EARL GREY.

September, 1818.

My dear Lord Grey,

Many thanks for the important information you have sent me, which I have forwarded to ——, whose children, I find, are better; but I hope he will not resume his security. I shall be very much surprised if it turns out that Stewart can stop the progress of ulcers found in the lungs; but the project of hardening

* Dr. Thompson of Edinburgh.

the lungs, by hardening their case, seems worth attending to. Most of the viscera can be got at, and improved, by topical applications,—liver, stomach, kidneys, etc.

I think I shall be able to make out a journey to the North this year. It will give me sincere pleasure to come to Howick; I have no doubt of a hearty welcome. The Duchess of Bedford is full of amusement and sense; but I need no other motive to visit Howick than the sincere respect and friendship I entertain for its inhabitants, whose acquaintance I find myself to have made (so human life slips on!) eleven years ago.

We have about two-thirds of a crop in this country, and I have a fine crop of Talavera wheat. The Granvilles are at Castle Howard, and all the Morpeths (no mean part of the population of Yorkshire) fully established there. The old Earl is young, athletic, and merry.

You had better write to the Duke of Norfolk about the seats of our friend Philips and his son, as they will both probably be hanged by the mob in cotton twist.

The Commissioner will have hard work with the Scotch atheists; they are said to be numerous this season, and in great force, from the irregular supply of rain.

I am by no means well this day, so I must leave off writing; I will write to you before I come, and hear from you before I set off.

Ever, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

148.] To Lady Holland.

Foston, October 11th, 1818.

My dear Lady Holland,

Allen asked when Douglas and I come to the South; but I had no thoughts of coming, and Douglas has been at Westminster some time, fought his first battle, come off victorious, and is completely established. Instead of the south, I am turning my face northwards, to see Lord Grey and Jeffrey. John Murray and I are to meet at the best of all possible châteaux.

Some surprise is excited by your staying at Ampthill; but Rogers, I hear, has been sent for as a condiment, and Luttrell has been also in your epergne.

I am sorry we cannot agree about Walter Scott. My test of a book written to amuse, is amusement; but I am rather rash, and ought not to say *I am amused*, before I have inquired whether Sharp or Mackintosh is so. Whishaw's plan is the best: he gives no opinion for the first week, but confines himself to chuckling and elevating his chin; in the meantime he drives diligently about the first critical stations, breakfasts in Mark-lane, hears from Hertford College, and by Saturday night is as bold as a lion, and as decisive as a court of justice.

The —— are gone to ——, and superfine work there will be, and much whispering; so that a blind man should sit there, and believe they are all gone to bed, though the room is full of the most brilliant company! As for me, I like a little noise and nature, and a large party, very merry and happy. Yours,

Sydney Smith.

149.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, October 23rd, 1818.

My dear Lord Grey,

Douglas is a great deal better, and if he has no relapse will do well. Mrs. Sydney is in town nursing him by this time, though I have not yet heard accounts of her arrival. I am on guard here, with three children of my own and one of my neighbour's, in whose house (guided always by the most rigid rules of vaccination and Jenner) the natural small-pox has broken out, but without death or ugliness.

I am heartily sorry not to make out my visit to Howick. It is not impossible, but very improbable.

I have had a letter today from Lady Holland. The air of North Wiltshire is too keen for Henry. It is difficult to suit him with a climate. We have, to be sure, very little variety of that article in England to choose from, and what there is, cannot be called extra or superfine; yet I should not like to be near Marsh at the first intimation that Lady Holland is displeased with *his* climate. But pray do not repeat these profane jokes, or I shall see Antonio with the bowstring, or John Allen with a few grains of homicide powder in a tea-cup.

The Ministry, I hear, mean to refuse the renewal of the Committee. Mr. —— has been at Lord Carlisle's; I should like very much to have seen him. A good deal depends upon what figure a husband cuts in a room. Much may be conceded to income and local position, but not all. I could have told in a moment whether he would, or would not pass, but I did not see him. Lady Georgiana was for him, so was Lord Morpeth. I have written you a long letter,

intending only to write three lines; but garrulity with tongue and pen is my misfortune, and, this evening, yours also.

Always, my dear Lord, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

150.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, October 29th, 1818.

My dear Lord,

You will be so obliging as to write me word when your schemes are fixed. My present plan is to be in London for three or four months, about the 10th of December. I am truly sorry to receive such accounts of Lady Grey. It strikes me that she has a very good constitution, and I have no doubt we shall have a very merry christening in Portman-square, to which, I strongly suspect, you will invite me; and if Lady Grey (to whom my very kind regards) wishes to see a child gracefully held, and to receive proper compliments upon its beauty, and to witness the consummation of all ecclesiastical observances, she will invite me to perform the ceremony.

Jeffrey, to whom I was going when I left you, is very ill, at Glasgow, in the hands of surgeons.

Douglas I am quite at my ease about; many thanks for your kind anxiety. I have not read the Memoirs you allude to: your account of them makes me curious.

Ever, dear Lord Grey, yours very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

151.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Foston, Nov. 23rd, 1818.

My dear Jeffrey,

I entirely agree with you respecting the Americans, and believe that I am to the full as much a Philo-yankeeist as you are. I doubt if there ever was an instance of a new people conducting their affairs with so much wisdom, or if there ever was such an extensive scene of human happiness and prosperity. However, you could not know that such were my opinions; or if you did, you might imagine I should sacrifice them to effect; and in either case your caution was proper.

I go to London the 15th of December, and will send you 'America' before then. I certainly will make you a visit at Edinburgh; and remain ever, my dear Jeffrey, most sincerely yours,

Sydney Smith.

152.] To the Earl Grey.

Foston, Nov. 30th, 1818.

Dear Lord Grey,

I will send Lady Grey the news from London when I get there. I am sure she is too wise a woman not to be fond of gossiping; I am fond of it, and have some talents for it.

I recommend you to read Hall, Palmer, Fearon, and Bradling's Travels in America, particularly Fearon; these four books may, with ease, be read through between breakfast and dinner. There is nothing so curious and interesting as the rapidity with which the

Americans are spreading themselves over that immense continent.

It is quite contrary to all probability that America should remain in an integral state. They aim at extending from sea to sea, and have already made settlements on the Pacific. There can be no community of interest between people placed under such very different circumstances: the maritime Americans, and those who communicate with Europe by the Mississippi are at this moment, as far as interest can divide men, two separate people. There does not appear to be in America at this moment one man of any considerable talents. They are a very sensible people; and seem to have conducted their affairs, upon the whole, very well. Birkbeck's second book is not so good as his first. He deceives himself,—says he *wishes* to deceive himself,—and is not candid. If a man chooses to say, "I will live up to my neck in mud, fight bears, swim rivers, and combat backwoodsmen, that I may ultimately gain an independence for myself and children," this is plain and intelligible; but, by Birkbeck's account, it is much like settling at Putney or Kew; only the people are more liberal and enlightened. Their economy and their cheap government will do some good in this country by way of example. Their allowance to Munro is £5000 per annum; and he finds his own victuals, fire, and candles!

Ever yours, dear Lord Grey, most sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

153.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

January 12th, 1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

Do you know any sensible, agreeable person of the name of Allen, a bachelor, and a layman? There is likely to be a vacancy soon in Dulwich College, and no such person as I have described can be found.

I have no shyness with strangers, and care not where and with whom I dine. Today I dined with Sir Henry Torrens, the Duke of York's secretary, and found him a very gentleman-like, civilized man, with what would pass in the army for a good understanding. I was very well pleased with all I saw, for he has six elegant, pretty children, and a very comfortable villa at Fulham; his rooms were well lighted, warmed in the most agreeable, luxurious manner with Russian stoves, and his dinner excellent. Everything was perfectly comfortable. What is the use of fish or venison, when the backbone is six degrees below the freezing-point? Of all miserable habitations, an English house, either in very hot or very cold weather, is the worst.

My little boy, whom you were so good as to inquire about, is quite well, and returned to Westminster. He has fought two or three battles successfully, and is at the head of his class.

I hope Lord Grey liked Burdett's letter to Cobbett. It is excellent, and will do that consummate villain some mischief; he is still a great deal read.

I passed four hours yesterday with my children in the British Museum: it is now put on the best possible footing, and exhibited courteously and publicly to all. The visitors when I was there were principally

maid-servants. Fifty thousand people saw it last year. My kindest regards, if you please, to my young friends, and to the excellent Lord of Howick.

Ever my dear Lady Grey, yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

I am going to Bath next week, to see my father, aged eighty.

154.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

Dear Lady Grey,

Macdonald spoke extremely well, and to the entire satisfaction of all his friends. Sir Robert Wilson was a complete failure: he could lead an army in or out of a defile, but cannot speak. Mr. L——, the jocular Yorkshire member, is supposed to be the most consummately impudent man that ever passed the Humber. Waithman, the linendraper, spoke very well, and with great propriety; he has been an improved man ever since Lord Grey gave him such a beating. Mr. Ellis, son of Lord Mendip, appears upon the London arena;—politics unknown; a very gentleman-like, sensible young man, but, I fear, a Tory.

I met Lady C—— L—— last night,—the first time I have seen her since *the book*: a very cold manner on my part. Four sides of paper the next morning from her, and a plain and vigorous chastisement from me; but not uncivil. I am a great man for mercy; and I told her, if she would conduct herself with prudence and common sense, her conduct would in time be forgotten.

We had a large party at the Berrys' last night; very agreeable, and everybody there.

Antonio is married to one of the under cook-maids, which makes the French cook very angry, as an interference with his department and perquisites. They report that Pidcock, of the Exeter Change, is to take Antonio.

Tierney (not, as you know, inclined to be sanguine) is in very good spirits, and expects great divisions.

Tell my Lord, if he wants to read a good savoury ecclesiastical pamphlet, to read Jonas Dennis's 'Concio Cleri,' a book of about one hundred and fifty pages: he is the first parson who has caught scent of the Roman Catholic Bill, passed at the end of the last Parliament; and no she-bear robbed of her whelps can be more furious.

A new actor has appeared, a Mr. Farren, an Irishman; very much admired. I have not heard him, for I never go to plays, and should not care (except for the amusement of others) if there was no theatre in the whole world; it is an art intended only for amusement, and it never amuses me. We are very gay here, and S—— takes it kindly and is not afraid.

SYDNEY SMITH.

155.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Holland House. No date.

Dear Lady Grey,

I write from Holland House, where all are very well, except Charles, who is returned with a fit of the jaundice; but it is not of any consequence. I scarcely

ever saw a more pleasing, engaging, natural young man.

I am truly glad to hear you are in good spirits. I believe, when any serious good quality or wise exertion is required of you, you will rummage about, and come out with it at last.

We had a large party at dinner here yesterday:—Dr. Wollaston, the great philosopher, who did not say one word; William Lamb; Sir Henry Bunbury; Palmella, the Portuguese Ambassador; Lord Aberdeen; the Exquisite; Sir William Grant, a rake and disorderly man of the town, recently Master of the Rolls; Whishaw, a man of fashion; Frere; Hallam, of the 'Middle Ages;' and myself. In spite of such heterogeneous materials, we had a pleasant party. Mary is becoming very handsome.

Sir Henry Halford told me that the Queen's property was estimated at £150,000, including jewels of every description. The £28,000 of jewels she received from the King at her marriage, she has given back to him.

It is reported that the Chancellor wishes to retire, if a successor could be found to exclude Leach, whom he hates. The seals are said to have been offered to, and refused by, Sir William Grant; and the Irish Chancellor is talked of. Lord —— is suspected to have written some verses himself. He went out a calculator, and is returned a child of Nature, and probably a lyric bard.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

S. S.

156.] To the Countess Grey.

20, *Saville-row, Feb. 5th*, 1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

Tierney made a very good speech, very well calculated to get votes. Frankland Lewis did very well. Mr. Maberley introduced some very striking arguments, but got wrong toward the end. This is the Augustan age of aldermen. Alderman Heygate has far exceeded Waithman, who spoke very well.

Nothing will, I believe, be said, by way of eulogium, upon Romilly and Elliott; a foolish, parading practice, very properly put an end to.

When you come to town again, pray see the new Custom-house. The attractive objects in it are the long room, one of the finest I ever saw in my life; and the façade, towards the river. I have also seen, this day, the Mint, which I think would please you. Lord Grey's Miss O'Neil is accused of ranting.

Antonio at last ran away and offered himself to Lady C—— L——. She has taken two days to consider of it.

Lord Grey will like that article in the Edinburgh Review upon 'Universal Suffrage:' it is by Sir James Mackintosh. There is a pamphlet on Bullion, by Mr. Copplestone, of Oxford, much read; but bullion, I think, is not a favourite dish at Howick.

Sydney Smith.

157.] To the Earl Grey.

Saville-row, Feb. 19th, 1819.

My dear Lord Grey,

I am heartily glad that it has all ended so well, and

that Lady Grey's misery and your anxiety are at an end; and I do assure you, it has diffused a universal joy among your friends here. Pray say everything that is kind from me to Lady Grey.

I was on the hustings the greater part of the morning yesterday, with the Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay. Hobhouse has some talent for addressing the mob. They would not hear Lamb nor Hunt. Lamb's election is considered as safe.

Lauderdale is better today. I cannot make out what the attack has been, but I suspect, to speak the plain truth, apoplectic. His memory was almost entirely gone from about one o'clock to six; in the course of the evening he completely recovered it, and is now getting rapidly well. In future he must be more idle, and think less of bullion and the country; with these precautions, he has a good many years before him.

It is generally thought that Government would have been beaten last night, if letters had been sent on the side of Opposition, as they were on the other side.

You must read Cobbett's Grammar; it is said to be exceedingly good. I went yesterday to see the Penitentiary: it is a very great national work, and well worth your seeing; and tell Lady Grey, when she comes to town, to walk on that very fine terrace between Vauxhall and Westminster Bridge. It is one of the finest things about London.

I agree with you in all you say about the democrats; they are as much to be kept at bay with the left hand, as the Tories are with the right.

Ever yours very sincerely, dear Lord Grey,

SYDNEY SMITH.

158.] To the Countess Grey.

1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

It is now generally thought that the Chancellor will stay in. The Chancellor of Ireland would not take the office if offered to him. If Lord Eldon does give up, Baron Richards is thought to be his most probable successor.

When Lord Erskine was ill at Oatlands,* Mr. Dawson dressed himself up as the new Lady Erskine, and sent up word that she wished to see the Duchess. Lord Lauderdale, who was with her, came out to prevent the intrusion of the new peeress; who kicked, screamed, and scratched, and vowed she would come in. At last, Lauderdale took her up in his arms, and was going to carry her downstairs; but Lord Alvanley, pretending to assist Lauderdale, opened the door. Lady Erskine extricated herself from the Scotch Hercules, and, with torn veil and dishevelled hair, flung herself at the Duchess's feet! Lauderdale stamped about like one mad, expecting every moment the Duchess would go into hysterics. The scene was put an end to by a universal roar of laughter from everybody in the room; and the astonished Lauderdale beheld the peeress kicking off her petticoats, and collapsing into a well-known dandy! In the meantime, poor Lord Erskine lies miserably ill; and if he does not die from the illness, will probably die from the effects of it.

The Hollands have read Rogers's poem, and like it. The verses on Pæstum are said to be beautiful. The whole poem is not more than eight hundred lines. Luttrell approves: I have not seen it yet.

* The Duke of York's house, near Walton.

I went yesterday to see the national monuments in St. Paul's, and never beheld such a disgusting heap of trash. It is a disgrace to a country to encourage such artists. Samuel Johnson's monument, by old Bacon, is an exception. I have seen today, at the Prince's Riding-house, the casts from the Florence Gallery, of Niobe and her Children, arranged by Cockerell's son upon a new theory. They give me very great pleasure; pray see them when you come to town. Afterwards I went over Carlton House, with Nash, the architect. The suite of golden rooms, 450 feet in length, is extremely magnificent; still, not good enough for a palace.

Brougham, I think, does not look well. He has been too busily engaged. If he would stint himself to doing twice as much as two of the most active men in London, it would do very well.

We talked at Holland House tonight of good reading, and it was voted that Charles Earl Grey was one of the best readers in England. Lord Holland proposed the motion, and I seconded it. But it is one o'clock in the morning, and I must go to bed.

Ever, dear Lady Grey, yours very affectionately and sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

159.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

Opposition seems to get stronger and stronger every day. The most sanguine think the Ministry will be

beaten; the least so, that Vansittart and the Doctor will be thrown overboard.

I have read Rogers; there are some very good descriptions,—the Mother and Child, Mr. Fox at St. Ann's Hill, and several more. The beginning of the verses on Pæstum are very good too. I am going to dine with the Miss Berrys today, where I am in high favour, and am reckoned a wit.

Very bad accounts of Lord Erskine,—very ill and languid from the attack, though out of danger.

I am glad to hear from Sir Charles Monck, that rents begin to be paid again in Northumberland; I thought the practice had been lost altogether.

SYDNEY SMITH.

160.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, April 2nd, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

In talking of subjects, why should I not take up that of Tithes? It is untouched in our Review, and of general English interest. My doctrines upon it are, that they should be commuted for corn payments; but I will undertake to make a good article upon it and a liberal one.

It pleases me sometimes to think of the very great number of important subjects which have been discussed in so enlightened a manner in the Edinburgh Review. It is a sort of magazine of liberal sentiments, which I hope will be read by the rising generation, and infuse into them a proper contempt for their parents' stupid and unphilosophical prejudices.

We have all been making a long stay in London, and succeeded very well there.

You see this spirited House of Commons knows how to demean itself when any solid act of baseness, such as the ten thousand pounds to the Duke of York, is in agitation. Scarlett has made a very great character as a speaker. Mackintosh made a prodigious speech on the reform of the criminal law. I wish you would come into Parliament and outdo them both, as I verily believe you would. God bless you, dear Jeffrey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

161.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, May 17th, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

I wrote to you some time since, proposing for myself an article upon Tithes, to which you immediately consented. I learn from Brougham (through Allen however) that he had, above a twelvemonth since, with your consent, engaged this subject. Is this so? If it is, would it not be better to keep some memorandum of these sort of engagements?—(excuse the impertinence of the suggestion.) If it is *not* so, I will proceed. In the meantime, I will proceed upon an article of Mr. Dennis and the Church, and I have finished a short article of Heude's 'Travels across the Desert, from Bagdad to Constantinople.' I shall proceed with such sort of books till some interesting subject occurs to me of greater importance. I have already your consent to Mr. Dennis.

Poor Seymour!* Every year thins the ranks of

* Lord Webb Seymour, brother to the Duke of Somerset.

our old friends. Those who remain must take closer order.

I have read no article but Ross, which I like, and Laney, which I do not dislike, though I think it might have been more entertaining.

What a singular Parliament this is! It all proceeds from paying when they are not frightened. The severe scrutiny into evaded taxes has thickened the ranks of Opposition.

I long to see you, but locomotion becomes every year more difficult, because I get poorer and poorer as my family grows up. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

162.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Saville-row, June, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

This number of the Review is much liked, in spite of the nonsense I have contributed; particularly, I think, Mackintosh's paper on Universal Suffrage.

The Opposition expect to muster strong. Tierney, who is always the reverse of sanguine, talks of one hundred and eighty or two hundred.

Rogers's poem is just out. The Hollands speak very highly of it. Crabbe is coming out with a poem of twelve thousand lines, for which, and the copy of his other works, Murray is to give him three thousand pounds,—a sum which Crabbe has heard mentioned before, but of which he can form no very accurate numerical notion. All sums beyond a hundred pounds must be to him mere indistinct vision—clouds and darkness.

Lord Byron's satires, brought over by Lord Lauderdale, are sent back for mitigation down to the standard law level. Murray is afraid of his ears. Lord John Russell is coming out with the Memoirs of Lord Russell, and Miss Berry with those of Lady Russell.

Ever, my dear friend, yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

163.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, July 7th, 1819.

Dear Allen,

I have never a cold in winter, by any accident or any carelessness; in summer, no attention can preserve me from them; and they come upon me with a violence which is extremely distressing: no determination to the lungs, no cough, merely catarrh, but catarrh which prevents me from hearing, seeing, smelling, or speaking for weeks together, indeed all the summer; and this has been the case for many years. Can you do me any good?

Can you give me any subject, or tell me any book, for the Review? I have sent a long article upon Botany Bay.

Pray tell me how Lord Holland is, and how my brother is. My eldest son Douglas (whom you may remember at Holland House) has succeeded in the trial at Westminster, and Hall* has promised to remember him in the election to Christchurch. This is very well if he does not succeed in the attempt to go to the West Indies,—a much more certain road to independence than any he is likely to get into in this

* Dean of Christchurch, Oxford.

country; but Baring, in the immensity of his transactions, is hardly likely to keep in mind anything so unimportant.

What are your plans for the summer?

I have read Galiano's letters, but they are so utterly insignificant, that there is nothing more to be said of them than that they are not worth speaking about. I scarcely ever read a more insignificant collection of letters. He wrote a little tract in the beginning of life about the importation of corn; and the recollection of that is the subject of the letters, for twenty years, to Madame D'Epinay; or, if there is any variation, of his trumpery commissions to the good-natured woman.

'Lettres à l'auteur d'un ouvrage ayant pour titre, Superstitions et Prestiges des Philosophes du 18 siècle, dans lequel on examine plusieurs opinions qui mettent obstacle à l'entier établissement de la Religion en France; par M. Deleuse. 8vo.' Do you know anything of this book?—and of 'Campagne de l'Armée Française en Portugal, 1810-11; avec un précis de celles qui l'ont précédé; par un Officier supérieur employé dans l'état-major de cette armée'?

Yours, my dear Allen, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

164.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, July 30th, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

I hear you are going to Brougham's. I should like most exceedingly to meet you there, but it is hardly possible. Poor Playfair!

You have never told me how your little girl is.

What do you think will become of all these political agitations? I am strongly inclined to think, whether now or twenty years hence, that Parliament *must* be reformed. The case that the people have is too strong to be resisted; an answer may be made to it, which will satisfy enlightened people perhaps, but none that the mass will be satisfied with. I am doubtful whether it is not *your* duty and *my* duty to become moderate Reformers, to keep off worse.

We are upon the eve here of a good harvest, and I have just finished twenty acres of hay. I am far gone in agriculture. God bless you, my dear friend!

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

165.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, August 7th, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

You must consider that Edinburgh is a very grave place, and that you live with philosophers who are very intolerant of nonsense. I write for the London, not for the Scotch market, and perhaps more people read my nonsense than your sense. The complaint was loud and universal of the extreme dulness and lengthiness of the Edinburgh Review. Too much, I admit, would not do of my style; but the proportion in which it exists enlivens the Review, if you appeal to the whole public, and not to the eight or ten grave Scotchmen with whom you live. I am a very ignorant, frivolous, half-inch person; but, such as I am, I am sure I have done your Review good, and contributed to bring it into notice. Such as I am, I shall be, and

cannot promise to alter. Such is my opinion of the effect of my articles. I differ with you entirely about Lieutenant Heude. To do such things very often would be absurd; to punish a man every now and then for writing a frivolous book is wise and proper; and you would find, if you lived in England, that the review of Lieutenant Heude is talked of and quoted for its fun and impertinence, when graver and abler articles are thumbed over and passed by. Almost any one of the sensible men who write for the Review would have written a much wiser and more profound article than I have done upon the Game Laws. I am quite certain nobody would obtain more readers for his essay upon such a subject; and I am equally certain that the principles are *right*, and that there is no lack of sense in it.

So I judge myself; but, after all, the practical appeal is to you. If you think my assistance of no value, I am too just a man to be angry with you upon that account; but while I write, I must write in my own way. All that I meant to do with Lord Selkirk's case was to state it.

I am extremely sorry for Moore's misfortune, but only know generally that he has met with misfortune. God bless you!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

166.] To THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, August, 1819.

My dear Lady Grey,

I was just going to write to you or Lord Grey, to

make inquiries about you;—first, because I had not heard of you for a long time; next, because somebody told me you were at Malvern, and I wanted an explanation of the proceeding. I am very sorry to find it explained as you have explained it. God send your object may be answered in going there!

I am very fond of Malvern; the double view from the top of the hill is one of the finest things I know. My father some years had a house some four miles from Malvern—Broomsbery, Mr. Yates'; so I know all the country perfectly well.

I was extremely sorry to miss you and Lord Grey in London, but you rose above the horizon just as I sank. You are both wise, prudent, and good, so I suppose you have done right in giving up your house; but I sincerely regret any change that lessens my chance of seeing you. I smiled when I came to that part of your letter where you state that Charles Earl Grey is thoroughly *ennuyed* with Malvern. I can *thoroughly* understand the effect which such a place would have upon him; I am sorry I am not near, to quiz and attack him.

I wish you and Lord Grey would pay us a visit, and see how happy people can be in a small, snug parsonage. I am a great farmer;—am improving, and losing less money than formerly. The crops are abundant everywhere, and, as we are free from manufactures, there are no complaints. The state of the clothing counties of the North (unless the cessation of the demand be temporary) will become truly alarming.

SYDNEY SMITH.

167.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Foston, August 16th, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

Many thanks for your wise and gentlemanlike letter. Perhaps I was a little perverse. I will promise to rebel no more, but attend to your fatherly admonition, taking it as a proof that you confide in the sincere friendship and affection I bear towards you; and I am *sure* you have no friend in the world who loves you better than I do.

You do me honour when you say the subjects I undertake should be important; but, to omit any other difficulty, there is a difficulty in finding such subjects. If you can suggest any to me, I shall be obliged. I mention more books than I shall review, because many on inspection prove unworthy. I should like to write a short article on the Poor Laws. If trade does not increase, there will be a war of the rich against the poor. In that case, you and I, I am afraid, shall be of different sides.

Sydney Smith.

I hope the Manchester riots will appear next number; I am ready for them, if nobody else is.

168.] To the Countess Grey.

Foston, Nov. 3rd, 1819.

I am truly concerned, my dear Lady Grey, to hear Lord Grey has been so ill; and I thank you sincerely for the confidence you show in my attachment to him, by informing me of it. For himself, it would be far

better if he could remain quietly in the country, but the times will not admit of it; so do you inculcate prudence in what concerns the body, and he will go with the good wishes of all honest men.

I think if I were to talk over the matter with Lord Grey, I should hardly differ with him upon any one point;—certainly not upon the enormity of the outrage at Manchester, upon the necessity of county meetings, upon the reprehensible conduct of Ministers in approving of the proceedings of the magistrates, and upon the folly and iniquity of dismissing Lord Fitzwilliam.

I cannot measure the danger; I *guess* there is no more danger at present than what vigilance and activity, without any new and extraordinary coercion, may guard against. With a failing revenue, depressed commerce, manufactures, and industry, and with an Administration determined to concede nothing, there may be hereafter a struggle. If there be, it will not end in democracy, but in despotism. In which of these two evils it terminates, is of no more consequence than from which tube of a double-barrelled pistol I meet my destruction.

Yours, dear Lady Grey, with affection and respect,

SYDNEY SMITH.

169.] To DOUGLAS SMITH, ESQ.,

King's Scholar at Westminster College.

Foston Rectory, 1819.

My dear Douglas,

Concerning this Mr. ——, I would not have you

put any trust in him, for he is not trustworthy; but so live with him as if one day or other he were to be your enemy. With such a character as his, this is a necessary precaution.

In the time you can give to English reading you should consider what it is most needful to have, what it is most shameful to want,—shirts and stockings, before frills and collars. Such is the history of your own country, to be studied in Hume, then in Rapin's History of England, with Tindal's Continuation. Hume takes you to the end of James the Second, Rapin and Tindal will carry you to the end of Anne. Then, Coxe's 'Life of Sir Robert Walpole,' and the 'Duke of Marlborough;' and these read with attention to dates and geography. Then, the history of the other three or four enlightened nations in Europe. For the English poets, I will let you off at present with Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Shakspeare; and remember, always in books, keep the best company. Don't read a line of Ovid till you have mastered Virgil; nor a line of Thomson till you have exhausted Pope; nor of Massinger, till you are familiar with Shakspeare.

I am glad you liked your box and its contents. Think of us as we think of you; and send us the most acceptable of all presents,—the information that you are improving in all particulars.

The greatest of all human mysteries are the Westminster holidays. If you can get a peep behind the curtain, pray let us know immediately the day of your coming home.

We have had about three or four ounces of rain here, that is all. I heard of your being wet through in London, and envied you very much. The whole of this

parish is pulverized from long and excessive drought. Our whole property depends upon the tranquillity of the winds: if it blow before it rains, we shall all be up in the air in the shape of dust, and shall be *transparished* we know not where.

God bless you, my dear boy! I hope we shall soon meet at Lydiard. Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

170.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, York, Dec. 3rd, 1819.

My dear Lord Grey,

I am truly concerned to see you (in the papers) talking of your health, as you are reported to have done. God grant you may be more deceived in that, than you are in the state of the country! Pray tell me how you are, when you can find leisure to do so.

I entirely agree with you, that force alone, without some attempts at conciliation, will not do. Readers are fourfold in number, compared with what they were before the beginning of the French war; and demagogues will, of course, address to them every species of disaffection. As the violence of restraint increases, there will be private presses, as there are private stills. Juries will acquit, being themselves Jacobins. It is possible for able men to do a great deal of mischief in libels, which it is extremely difficult to punish as libels; and the worst of it all is, that a considerable portion of what these rascals say, is so very true. Their remedies are worse than the evils; but when they state to the people how they are bought and sold, and the abuses entailed upon the country by so corrupted a

Parliament, it is not easy to answer them, or to hang them.

What I want to see the State do, is, to listen in these sad times to some of its numerous enemies. Why not do something for the Catholics, and scratch them off the list? Then come the Protestant Dissenters. Then, of measures,—a mitigation of the game-laws—commutation of tithes—granting to such towns as Birmingham and Manchester the seats in Parliament taken from the rottenness of Cornwall—revision of the Penal Code—sale of the Crown lands—sacrifice of the Droits of Admiralty against a new war;—anything that would show the Government to the people in some other attitude than that of taxing, punishing, and restraining. I believe what Tierney said to be strictly true,—that the House of Commons is falling into contempt with the people. Democracy has many more friends among tradesmen and persons of that class of life than is known or supposed commonly. I believe the feeling is most rapidly increasing; and that Parliament, in two or three years' time, will meet under much greater circumstances of terror than those under which it is at present assembled.

From these speculations I slide, by a gentle transition, to Lady Grey: how is she? how is Lord Howick? Are you at your ease about the young man? If ever you will send him, or any of your sons, upon a visit to me, it will give me great pleasure to see them. They shall hear no Tory sentiments, and Howick will appear to be the centre of gaiety and animation compared to Foston. I am delighted with the part Lord Lansdowne has taken: he seems to have made a most admirable speech; but, after all, I believe

we shall go *ad veteris Nicolai tristia regna, Pitt ubi combustum Dundasque videbimus omnes.*

Ever yours, dear Lord Grey, sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

171.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Saville-row, December, (supposed to be) 1819.

My dear Lady Mary,

I was much amused with your thinking that you had discovered me in the Edinburgh Review; if you look at it again, you will find reason to alter your opinion.

I have brought all my children up to town; and they are, as you may suppose, not a little entertained and delighted. It is the first time they have ever seen four people together, except on remarkably fine days at the parish church. There seems to be nobody in town, nor will there be, I presume, before the meeting of Parliament.

I am writing to you at two o'clock in the morning, having heard of a clergyman who brought himself down from twenty-six to sixteen stone in six months, by lessening his sleep. When he began, he was so fat that he could not walk, and now he walks every day up one of the highest hills in the country, and remains in perfect health. I shall be so thin when you see me, that you may trundle me about like a mop. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

172.] To Edward Davenport, Esq.

Foston, York, Jan. 3rd, 1820.

My dear Davenport,

I sincerely hope your clerical friend will publish his statement; at the same time, it must not be dissembled that a true and candid narrative of what he saw, would for ever put an end to his chance of preferment. My opinion is the same as yours upon the Peterloo business. I have no doubt everything would have ended at Manchester as it did at Leeds, had there been the same forbearance on the part of the magistrates. Either they lost (no great loss) their heads, or the devils of local spite and malice had entered into them, or the nostrils of the clerical magistrates smelt preferment and Court favour; but let it have been what it will, the effects have been most deplorable.

I do not know who Morier is, unless he writes about Persia; my acquaintance is principally confined to sheep and oxen.

Have you read 'Ivanhoe'? It is the least dull, and the most easily read through, of all Scott's novels; but there are many more powerful. The subject, in novels, poems, and pictures, is half the battle. The representation of our ancient manners is a fortunate one, and ample enough for three or four more novels.

There are four or five hundred thousand readers more than there were thirty years ago, among the lower orders. A market is open to the democrat writers, by which they gain money and distinction. Goverment cannot prevent the commerce. A man, if he know his business as a libeller, can write enough for mischief, without writing enough for the Attorney-

General. The attack upon the present order of things will go on; and, unfortunately, the gentlemen of the people have a strong case against the House of Commons and the boroughmongers, as they call them. I think all wise men should begin to turn their faces reform-wards. We shall do it better than Mr. Hunt or Mr. Cobbett. Done it *must* and *will* be.

Mrs. Sydney sends her kind regards; in revenge, I beg to be remembered to your family, and remain, dear Davenport, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

173.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, Jan. 24th, 1820.

Dear Lord Grey,

If you want to read an agreeable book, read Golownin's narrative of his confinement in, and escape from, Japan; and I think it may do very well for reading out, which I believe is your practice—a practice which I approve rather than follow, and neglect it from mere want of virtue. I think also you may read De Foe's 'Life of Colonel Jack,'—entertaining enough when his hero is a scoundrel, but waxing dull as it gets moral. I never set you any difficult tasks in reading, but am as indulgent to you as I am to myself.

I saw Mr. —— the other night for the first time. I am decidedly of opinion that he is like other people. My neighbour, Lord Carlisle, gets younger and younger. I am heartily rejoiced at Mrs. Wilmot's marriage; but where will Lord Dacre pass his evenings now? Nothing could be more generous and disin-

terested on his part than to relinquish so pleasing a society. If this is not devotion, what is?

There are no appearances here of reviving trade; though many of declining agriculture. If the manufacturing misery continues, there will be a reaction of the Radicals. Assassinations and secret swearings, *à l'Irlandaise*, or something as bad,—marking an angry and suffering people struggling against restrictions. My curiosity is very much excited by Lord John's motion. Lord Castlereagh's assent to it must have surprised you, for I think his assent includes everything that is important; that a disfranchised borough may be taken out of the surrounding Hundred, and conferred elsewhere; or rather, that it need not necessarily be thrown into the surrounding Hundred.

I hope Lady Grey and all your children are well, and that you are improved in health, so as to have passed your Christmas merrily in the midst of your family. You have naturally a genius for good eating and drinking,—as I have often witnessed, and mean to witness again.

We have all been ill; I attended two of my children through a good stout fever of the typhus kind without ever calling in an apothecary but for one day. I depended upon blessed antimony, and watched anxiously for the time of giving bark. They are both now perfectly well. Pray remember me very kindly to dear Lady Grey; and believe me, my dear Lord, with sincere respect and attachment, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

174.] To E. DAVENPORT, ESQ.

January 29th, 1820.

Dear Davenport,

I think (but that *thinking* is mere conjecture) that you will be time enough for this number if your packet goes off in a fortnight after receiving this note; perhaps in a month, but the sooner the better. The publication of the Review is not punctual, but depends upon the kindness of Minerva in many parts of the island.

Nobody of whom I know so little, and to whose accuracy and fairness I would rather trust, than to those of Mr. Stanley.* Mr. T—— I do not know. Could you not procure some facts respecting the state of the late Incumbent at Rochdale at the Massacre of Peterloo?

The thing wanted for the lady in question will be the sober, domestic virtues of laying eggs and hatching them. The nest will be cotton,—and a very pleasant nest it is. I wish you were a Yorkshire squire keeping a large house of call in the pleasantest part of the North Riding.

SYDNEY SMITH.

Best compliments to Miss Davenport, who, if she keep a list of her conquests, will be so good as to put me down in the clergyman's leaf.

175.] To MISS BERRY.

Foston, Feb. 27th, 1820.

I thank you very much for the entertainment I have

* Afterwards Bishop of Norwich.

received from your book. I should however have been afraid to marry such a woman as Lady Rachel; it would have been too awful. There are pieces of china very fine and beautiful, but never intended for daily use. * * *

I have hardly slept out of Foston since I saw you. God send I may be still an animal, and not a vegetable! but I am a little uneasy at this season for sprouting and rural increase, for fear I should have undergone the metamorphose so common in country livings. I shall go to town about the end of March; it will be completely empty, and the dregs that remain will be entirely occupied about hustings and returning-officers.

Commerce and manufactures are still in a frightful state of stagnation.

> No foreign barks in British ports are seen,
> Stuff'd to the water's edge with velveteen,
> Or bursting with big bales of bombazine;
> No distant climes demand our corduroy,
> Unmatch'd habiliment for man and boy;
> No fleets of fustian quit the British shore,
> The cloth-creating engines cease to roar,
> Still is that loom which breech'd the world before.

I am very sorry for the little fat Duke de Berri, but infinitely more so for the dismissal of Decazes,—a fatal measure.

I must not die without seeing Paris. Figure to yourself what a horrid death,—to die without seeing Paris! I think I could make something of this in a tragedy, so as to draw tears from Donna Agnes and yourself. Where are you going to? When do you return? Why do you go at all? Is Paris more agreeable than London?

We have had a little plot here in a hay-loft. God forbid anybody should be murdered! but, if I were to turn assassin, it should not be of five or six Ministers, who are placed where they are by the folly of the country gentlemen, but of the hundred thousand squires, to whose stupidity and folly such an Administration owes its existence.

Ever your friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

176.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Saville-row, April 15th, 1820.

Dear Lord Grey,

People—that is, Whig people—are very much out of humour about Lord Morpeth. Lord Morpeth bears it magnanimously; and, I really believe, is glad he has left Parliament, though he does not like the mode. Lord Holland is very well; Lady Holland I have not yet seen. I have seen Lady Grey, the General, and Mrs. Grey. Brougham attends frequently at the Treasury, upon the Queen's business.

The King sits all day long with Lady C——, sketching processions and looking at jewels; in the meantime, she tells everywhere all that he tells to her. It is expected Burdett will have two years, for which I am heartily sorry. Hunt, I hope, will have six, if it is possible to inflict so many; not so much for his political crimes, but for himself; he is such a thorough ruffian. But he acquitted himself with great ability on his trial.

A narrative is handed about here, written upon the spot by Stanley, a clergyman, brother to Sir John,—

a very sensible, reasonable man. Read it before your first speech.

Walter Scott's novel is generally thought to be a failure; its only defenders I have heard of are Lord Grenville and Sir William Grant. Furniture Hope has published a novel; Malthus, a new book of Political Economy. I was glad to see the health of Lord John so firmly established; he is improved in every respect. People are red-hot again about the Manchester business, but the leading topic is Scotch and Yorkshire riots. I am truly sorry you do not come up, but I am not quite sure yet that you won't be provoked to come. Can I do anything for you in town? If any of the Ladies Grey want anything in the dress line, I will execute it better than Lord Lauderdale himself. Ever most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

177.] TO THE EARL GREY.

May 10th, 1820.

My dear Lord Grey,

I will try to get you a copy of Stanley's Narrative, which is printed, not published. I have seen your two daughters at Lady Lansdowne's, and at Lady Derby's; they both look well, and the gowns look more like French gowns than other people's gowns do. I am quite out of patience with Lady ——: her fate will be to marry on the Bath road or the Norfolk road; any other such offer on the North road can hardly be expected to occur. I think you might have talked it over with her, and good-naturedly attacked the romantic. The young man was introduced to me, or

rather I to him, at Lord Jersey's,—a very decent, creditable-looking young gentleman, and a good judge of sermons. He paid me many compliments upon mine, delivered last Sunday, against bad husbands, so that it is clear he intended to have made a very good one.

The B—— of —— is turned out to be baited next Friday upon the —— case, which appears to be one of great atrocity and persecution. It will end with their rejecting his petition, upon the principle of his having had his remedy in a court of law, of which he has neglected to avail himself; but the real good will be done by the publicity.

The picture of Our Saviour going into Jerusalem, by Haydon, is very bad; the general Exhibition good, as I hear. I have seen West's pictures:—Death on the White Horse—Jesus Rejected; I am sorry to say I admire them both. A new poem, by Milman, author of 'Fazio,' called 'Jerusalem,' or 'The Fall of Jerusalem,' very much admired, as I hear. Dudley Ward a good deal improved,—I believe, principally by Ellis's imitation of him, of which he is aware. The Whig Queen revives slowly; the seditious infant not yet christened. Lady Jersey as beautiful and as kind and agreeable as ever. Long live Queen Sarah!

Bayley told Tierney, Hunt would have been acquitted if he had called no witnesses. Tierney well, but very old, and unfit for anything but gentle work. I am going to dine with the Granvilles, to meet the Hollands. Lady Granville is nervous, on account of her room being lined with Spitalfields silk, which always makes Lady Holland ill; means to pass it off as foreign and smuggled, but has little chance of success. Creevy thinks the Session opens in a very mealy-mouthed

manner. I like your nephew Whitbread, the member, very much.

Lady Grey knows my regard and respect, and that I always send her such courtesy and kindness as I am capable of, whether I write it or not.

SYDNEY SMITH.

178.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, York, May 19th, 1820.

My dear Jeffrey,

You know what London is for anybody; much more what it is for me, who am feasted so much above my merits and my powers of digestion; accordingly I have done nothing, which I tell you with all penitence. My Irish books, which I took with me to London, are coming back by sea; therefore there is no chance of Ireland for this Review. However, I have gained oral information of considerable consequence. I have sent for the French Travels in Africa, translated and commented upon by Bowditch; and as soon as it comes, shall proceed upon it. I shall now send you a list of what I have offered to do, what you have allowed, and shall make you some fresh offers.

I found in London both my articles very popular,—upon the Poor Laws and America. The passage on Taxation had great success.

I hope you keep a list of books granted. Pray do. No news in town. Voting on one side, reasoning on the other! Everything like economy rejected with horror. Kindest regards to Murray. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

179.] To Lord Holland.

Foston, June 11th, 1820.

My dear Lord Holland,

I return you many thanks for your letter, and for the exertion in my behalf which you have made, with your accustomed friendship and kindness.

The Chancellor is quite right about political sermons, and in this I have erred; but I have a right to preach on general subjects of toleration, and the fault is not mine if the congregation apply my doctrine to passing events. But I will preach no more upon political subjects; I have not done so for many years, from a conviction that it was unfair. You gave me great pleasure by what you said to the Chancellor of my honesty and independence. I sincerely believe I shall deserve the character at your hands as long as I live. To say that I am *sure* I shall deserve it, would be as absurd as if a lady were to express an absolute certainty of her future virtue. In good qualities that are to continue for so many years, we can only *hope* for their continuance.

The incumbent is proceeding by slow degrees to Buxton. I wish him so well, that, under other circumstances, I should often write to know how he was going on; at present I must appear unfriendly, to avoid appearing hypocritical. I have spent *at least* £4000 on this place; for you must remember I had not only a house, but farm-buildings, to make; and there had been no resident clergyman here for a hundred and fifty years. I have also played my part in the usual manner, as doctor, justice, pacifier, preacher, farmer, neighbour, and diner-out. If I can mend my

small fortunes, I shall be very glad; if I cannot, I shall not be very sorry. In either case, I shall remain your attached and grateful friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

180.] To LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, July, 1820.

My dear Lady,

* * * * *

You see revolutions are spreading all over the world, —and from armies.

Would Mr. —— be pleased with an improvement of public liberty, which originated from the Coldstream Guards? Seriously speaking, these things are catching, and though I want improvement, I should abhor such improvers; besides, we shall get old-fashioned in all our institutions, and be stimulated, through vanity, to changes too rapid and too extensive.

Lord Liverpool's messenger mistook the way, and instead of bringing the mitre to me, took it to my next-door neighbour, Dr. Carey, who very fraudulently accepted it. Lord Liverpool is extremely angry, and I am to have the next!

SYDNEY SMITH.

181.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Foston, York, Sept. 3rd, 1820.

My dear Murray,

Many thanks for your kindness in inquiring about your old friends. I am very well, doubling in size every year, and becoming more and more fit for the butcher. Mrs. Sydney is much as she was.

I seldom leave home (except on my annual visit to London), and this principally because I cannot afford it. My income remains the same, my family increases in expense. My constitutional gaiety comes to my aid in all the difficulties of life; and the recollection that, having embraced the character of an honest man and a friend to rational liberty, I have no business to repine at that mediocrity of fortune which I *knew* to be its consequence.

Mrs. —— is a very amiable young woman, inferior in beauty to Lady Charlotte Campbell, and not so remarkable as Madame de Staël for the vigour of her understanding. Her husband appears to be everything that is amiable and respectable.

The Queen is contemptible; she will be found guilty, and sent out of the country with a small allowance, and in six months be utterly forgotten. So it will, I think, end; but still I think Lord Liverpool very blamable in not having put a complete negative upon the whole thing. It would have been better for the country, and exposed his party to less risk than they have been already exposed to in this business. The Whigs certainly would have refused to meddle with the divorce.

I am sorry to read in your letter such an account of Scotland. Do you imagine the disaffection to proceed from anything but want of employment? or, at least, that full employment, interspersed with a little hanging, will not gradually extinguish the bad spirit?

I have just read 'The Abbot;' it is far above common novels, but of very inferior execution to his others, and hardly worth reading. He has exhausted the subject of Scotland, and worn out the few characters that

the early periods of Scotch history could supply him with. Meg Merrilies appears afresh in every novel.

I wish you had told me something about yourself. Are you well? rich? happy? Do you digest? Have you any thoughts of marrying? My whole parish is to be sold for £50,000; pray buy it, quit your profession, and turn Yorkshire squire. We should be a model for squires and parsons. God bless you! All the family unite in kind regards. Shall we ever see you again?

S. S.

182.] To Lady Mary Bennett.

Sedgeley, October, 1820.

My dear Lady Mary,

I cannot shut my eyes, because, if I open them, I shall see what is disagreeable to the Court. I have no more doubt of the Queen's guilt than I have of your goodness and excellence. But do not, on that account, do me the injustice of supposing that I am deficient in factious feelings and principles, or that I am stricken by the palsy of candour. I sincerely wish the Queen may be acquitted, and the Bill and its authors may be thrown out. Whether justice be done to the Royal plaintiff is of no consequence: indeed he has no right to ask for justice on such points. I must, however, preserve my common sense and my factious principles distinct; and believe the Queen to be a very slippery person, at the moment I rejoice at the general conviction of her innocence.

I am, as you see, near Manchester. While here, I shall study the field of Peterloo.

You will be sorry to hear the trade and manufac-

tures of these counties are materially mended, and are mending. I would not mention this to you, if you were not a good Whig; but I know you will not mention it to anybody. The secret, I much fear, will get out before the meeting of Parliament. There seems to be a fatality which pursues us. When, oh when, shall we be really ruined?

Pray send me some treasonable news about the Queen. Will the people rise? Will the greater part of the House of Lords be thrown into the Thames? Will short work be made of the Bishops? If you know, tell me; and don't leave me in this odious state of innocence, when you can give me so much guilty information, and make me as wickedly instructed as yourself. And if you know that the Bishops are to be massacred, write by return of post.

Do you know how poor —— is handled in the Quarterly Review? It bears the mark of ****. I hope it is not his, for the sake of his character. Let me be duller than Sternhold and Hopkins, if I am to prove my wit at the expense of my friends! and in print too! God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

183.] TO LEONARD HORNER, ESQ.

Foston, 1820.

My dear Sir,

My friend (a potter), to whom we are all so deeply indebted every night and morning, wishes to place a son at Edinburgh, and I have promised to inquire for him. Pray be so good as to tell me the terms of Pillans, and also mention some good Presbyterian body

who takes pupils at no great salary. Never mind whether Whig or Tory, philosopher or no philosopher; a potter has nothing to do with such matters; all I require is that he should be steady and respectable, and that the young fashioner of vases and basins should have an apartment to himself, in which he may meditate intensely on clay. Do me the favour to mention terms.

Why don't you and Mrs. Horner come and see us, and hear me upon the subject of turnips? The corn is half destroyed. There is no end to the luck of this Administration; they were beginning to be unpopular with the country gentlemen, but now prices will get up.

I am just returned from a long journey into Somersetshire. Kind regards to your family, and name your time for coming here.

Ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

184.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, October, 1820.

My dear Jeffrey,

I shall be much obliged to you to print my two articles in the next Review, and to inform me of your intention on that point, under cover to G. Philips, Esq., M.P., Sedgeley, Manchester.

My Ireland I have taken some pains with. The history of the termination of the rivers of Botany Bay is curious, the article short, and undertaken at your special request that I should write another article.

'Is Southey's 'Life of Wesley' appropriated?' Is

Lord John Russell's book, called 'Essays and Sketches of Life and Character, by a Gentleman who has left his Lodgings'?

It is impossible but that the Queen will defeat the King, and throw out the Administration. The majority of bishops, with the Archbishop of York at their head, are against the divorce; the Archbishop of Canterbury is for it.

We have had a good harvest, but there is no market for anything.

I am sorry to see the appointment of Wilson. If Walter Scott can succeed in nominating a successor to Reid and Stewart, there is an end of the University of Edinburgh: your Professors then become competitors in the universal race of baseness and obsequiousness to power.

SYDNEY SMITH.

185.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 19th, 1820.

Dear Davenport,

The City of York have met and passed resolutions to address for a change of Ministers. I have not heard of any proposal for a county meeting, nor can I think that anything has yet been done which will turn Ministers out of office; almost all who supported them before will continue to support them; the greater part of their friends who voted against them thought the Queen guilty, and almost all justified Ministers in beginning the process. The case may be different if they make it a point of honour to withhold her just rights from the Queen, or to prevent you or me from

praying for her in public. Upon these points I have no doubt they will be defeated; but if they have the good sense to *see* that they are beaten, and not to make a stand for the baggage-wagons when they have lost the field, they may remain Ministers as long as Cheshire makes cheeses. I need not say to you that I am heartily glad the Queen is acquitted.

As for the virtue of the lady, you laymen must decide upon it. The style of manners she has adopted does not exactly tally with that of holy women in the days that are gone; but let us be charitable, and hope for the best.

The business of the Ministry is surely to prorogue Parliament for as long a time as possible. Some new whale may be in sight by that time.

Ever yours, dear Davenport,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Read, if you have not read, all Horace Walpole's letters, wherever you can find them;—the best wit ever published in the shape of letters. Marvel with me at the fine and spirited things in 'Anastasius;' they are, it is true, cemented together by a great deal of dull matter.

186.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Lambton Hall, Dec. 15th, 1820.

Dear Davenport,

I am just come from Edinburgh, and was staying with Jeffrey when your letter arrived. He does not like his editorial functions interfered with, and I do not like to interfere with them; so I must leave you and him to settle as to the article itself. If you write

it, and send it to me, I will play the part of Aristarchus to you; but remember,—do not accept me for an office of that nature, if you are afraid of truth and severity; upon such subjects I will flatter nobody; nor is it, I am sure, in your nature, or in your habits, to require any such thing.

I shall be at Foston on Sunday, and remain there for the rest of my life.

Scotland is becoming Whiggish and Radical. There is a great meeting at Durham today, in which Lord Grey is to bear a part. I have been staying with him. The Alnwick people came over with an address, and drank forty-four bottles of sherry, and fifty-two of old port, besides ale!

This seems a fine place in a very ugly country. The house is full of every possible luxury, and lighted with gas.

SYDNEY SMITH.

187.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Dec. 30th, 1820.

Dear Lady Grey,

The day I left Lambton was, fortunately for me, a very cold day, as the stage-coach was full. We had the captain of a Scotch vessel trading to Russia, an Edinburgh lawyer, an apothecary, a London horse-dealer, and myself. They were all very civil and good-humoured; the captain a remarkably clever, entertaining man. All were for the Queen, except the horsedealer.

Lady Georgiana Morpeth called here yesterday, accompanied by Agar Ellice, who is on a short visit to

Castle Howard. The Morpeths are just returned from the Duke of Devonshire's. Ellice thinks the Ministry will not go out, but proceed languidly with small majorities; I think it most probable they will be driven out. The appointment of —— is too ridiculous to be true. If Peel refuses, it is, I suppose, because he does not choose to accept a place in a carriage just about to be overturned. The good people of Edinburgh, putting together my visit to Lord Grey, my ulterior progress to Edinburgh, and the political meeting in that town consequent upon it, have settled that Lord Grey planned the meeting, and that I performed the diplomatic part.

I will fit the Lady Greys up with conversation for the spring, and make them the most dashing girls in London. Poor ——! if in love before, what will he be next spring? Poor B——! poor E——! poor everybody! The effect will be universal.

My kindest regards to Lord Grey and your daughters. My children are all perfectly well, so is Mrs. Sydney; Douglas, my eldest son, has distinguished himself at Westminster, and is, to my great delight, become passionately fond of books.

Always, my dear Lady Grey, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Only think of that obstinate Lord Lauderdale publishing his speech! But Lord Lauderdale, with all his good qualities and talents, has an appetite for being hooted and pelted, which is ten times a more foolish passion than the love of being applauded and huzzaed. You and I know a politician who has no passion for one thing or the other; but does his duty, and trusts to chance how it is taken.

188.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Boston, 1820.

My dear Jeffrey,

For the number next but one, I have engaged to write an article on Ireland, which shall contain all the information I can collect, detailed as well as I know how to detail it.

The Unitarians think the doctrine of the Trinity to be a profanation of the Scriptures; you compel them to marry in your churches, or rather, I should say, we compel them to marry in our churches; and when the male and female Dissenter are kneeling before the altar, much is said to them by the priest, of this, to them, abhorred doctrine. They are about to petition Parliament that their marriages may be put upon the same footing as those of Catholics and Quakers. The principles of religious liberty which I have learnt (perhaps under you) make me their friend in the question; and if you approve, I will write an article upon it. Upon the receipt of your letter in the affirmative, I will write to the dissenting king, William Smith, for information. Pray have the goodness to answer by return of post, or as soon after as you can, if it is but a word; as despatch in these matters, and in my inaccessible situation, is important.

Sydney Smith.

189.] To Edward Davenport, Esq.

Bath: no date.

Dear Davenport,

I think Jeffrey too timid, but he says that the Edin-

burgh Review is watched, and that there is a great disposition to attack it either in Scotland or London; and you must allow that Jeffrey or Brougham in the pillory would be a delicious occurrence for the Tories: I think John Williams would come and pelt.

Great light will be thrown upon the circumstances of the massacre, by Hunt's trial, which of course will be circulated widely through the country, and will furnish you with a good plea for the introduction of the subject. I heard Hunt at York, and was much struck with his boldness, dexterity, and shrewdness. Without any education at all, he is the most powerful barrister this day on the Northern Circuit; of course I do not mean the best instructed, but the man best calculated by nature for that sort of intellectual exertion.

You see by my letter I am in Bath,—to me, one of the most disagreeable places in the world; but I am on a visit to my father, eighty-two years of age, in full possession, not only of his senses, but of a very vigorous and superior understanding.

I have written two articles in this Edinburgh Review, —Poor Laws, and Seybert's America,—but they are both of a dry and discouraging nature.

Adieu! I hope to see you soon. Ever truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

190.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Foston, 1820.

Dear Mrs. Meynell,

It will give me great pleasure to hear of your health and continued well-doing. I suspect the little boy will be christened Hugo, that being an ancient name in the

Meynell family; and the mention of the little boy is an additional reason why you should write to me before he comes. You will never write after, for the infant of landed estate is so precious, that he would exhaust the sympathies, and fill up the life, of seven or eight mothers. The usual establishment for an eldest landed baby is, two wet nurses, two ditto dry, two aunts, two physicians, two apothecaries; three female friends of the family, unmarried, advanced in life; and often, in the nursery, one clergyman, six flatterers, and a grandpapa! Less than this would not be decent.

We are all well, and keep large fires, as it behoveth those who pass their summers in England.

I have not seen a living soul out of my family since I left London. It is some consolation to think I have avoided the awkward dilemma about the Queen. I should have thought it base not to call, and yet

* * * * *

My conjecture is that there will be no compromise, and that the Queen will be beaten out of the field. The chances against this are that the King's nerves will give way. You do not know that —— is in the Green Bag. You thought him full of poetry alone, but gallantry and treason are in his composition. The Queen and her handmaids have been much exposed to the shafts of calumny on account of that too amiable and seducing fellow, who is at once a Lovelace and a Pope. Write me a line to show we are friends, and I will announce the event.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

191.] To Mrs. Meynell.

York, 1820.

Dear Mrs. Meynell,

We have all been ill,—that is, all but I;—a sort of fever; and they have all been cured by me, for I am deeper in medicine than ever.

Douglas is gone to school; not with a light heart, for the first year of Westminster in college is severe:—an intense system of tyranny, of which the English are very fond, and think it fits a boy for the world; but the world, bad as it is, has nothing half so bad.

I strongly recommend you to read Captain Golownin's narrative of his imprisonment in Japan; it is one of the most entertaining books I have read for a long time. You must also read —— ——. I would let you off if I could, but my sense of duty will not permit me to do so; for it is, and has long been, my province, to fit you up for London conversation; Mrs. Crape (your maid) dresses you—your other half falls to me.

I hope your children are all well; if they are not, I am sure you are not; and if you are not, I shall not be so. So God bless you, my dear Gee! and remember me kindly to your husband.

Ever affectionately yours,

Sydney Smith.

192.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

February 2nd, 1821.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have read Southey, and think it so fair and reason-

able a book, that I have little or nothing to say about it; so that I follow your advice, and abandon it to any one who may undertake it. What I should say, if I undertook it, would be very unfavourable to Methodism, which you object to, though upon what grounds I know not. Of course Methodists, when attacked, cry out, "Infidel! Atheist!"—these are the weapons with which all fanatics and bigots fight; but should we be intimidated by this, if we do not deserve it? And does it follow that any examination of the faults of Dissenters is a panegyric upon the Church of England? But these are idle questions, as I do not mean to review it. I have written an article upon Dissenters' marriages, which I will send the moment I get some books from town. On other points I am stopped for books.

I purpose sending you a short article upon the savage and illegal practice of setting spring-guns and traps for poachers.

God bless you! Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

193.] To COUNTESS GREY.

February 9th, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

There is an end for ever of all idea of the Whigs coming into power. The kingdom is in the hands of an oligarchy, who see what a good thing they have got of it, and are too cunning and too well aware of the *tameability* of mankind to give it up. Lord Castlereagh smiles when Tierney prophesies resistance. His

Lordship knows very well that he has got the people under for ninety-nine purposes out of a hundred, and that he can keep them where he has got them. Of all ingenious instruments of despotism, I most commend a popular assembly where the majority are paid and hired, and a few bold and able men, by their brave speeches, make the people believe they are free.

Lord Lauderdale has sent me two pamphlets, and two hundred and thirty pounds of salt-fish.

I hear you have taken a house in Stratford-place. The houses there are very good. You will be much more accessible than heretofore. A few yards in London dissolve or cement friendship.

SYDNEY SMITH.

194.] To EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, Feb. 10th, 1821.

My dear Davenport,

When shall you be in town? There is an end for ever of all Whig Administrations.

I am glad you agree with me about 'Anastasius.' I am writing an article in the Edinburgh Review against Squires for using spring-guns, and delicately insisting upon the usefulness of making two or three examples in that line. I have Southey's 'Life of Wesley.' To make a saleable book seems to have been a main consideration; but it is not unreasonable, and is very well written.

I have taken lodgings in York for myself and family during the Assizes, to enable them to stare out of the window, there being nothing visible where we live but crows.

Mrs. F——, the liberty woman, is in York. There are several Scotch families staying there. No bad place for change, cheapness, and comparative warmth.

Yours, dear Davenport, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

195.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Foston, Feb. 12th, 1821.

Dear Mrs. Meynell,

I was very glad to receive your letter, and to find you were well and prosperous.

The articles written by me in the Edinburgh Review are, that upon Ireland, and that upon Oxley's 'Survey of Botany Bay.'

The Archbishop of York makes me a very good neighbour, and is always glad to see me.

I agree with you that there is an end for ever of the Whigs coming into power. The country belongs to the Duke of Rutland, Lord Lonsdale, the Duke of Newcastle, and about twenty other holders of boroughs. They are our masters! If any little opportunity presents itself, we will hang them, but most probably there will be no such opportunity; it always is twenty to one against the people. There is nothing (if you will believe the Opposition) so difficult as to bully a whole people; whereas, in fact, there is nothing so easy, as that great artist Lord Castlereagh so well knows.

Let me beg of you to take more care of those beautiful geraniums, and not let the pigs in upon them. Geranium-fed bacon is of a beautiful colour; but it takes so many plants to fatten one pig, that such a

system can never answer! I cannot conceive who put it into your head. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

196.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, March 27th, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

Nothing so difficult to send, or which is so easily spoilt in the carriage, as news. It was fresh, and seemed true, when you packed it up; that is all you are answerable for.

I shall be in town the 24th of April, and am very glad to find you are so near a neighbour. We have been at the Assizes at York for three weeks, where there is always a great deal of dancing and provincial joy.

I am very sorry the Hollands have left the pavement of London, because, when I come to London for a short time, I hate fresh air and green leaves, and waste of time in going and coming; but I love the Hollands so much, that I would go to them in any spot, however innocent, sequestered, and rural. You have been in town a fortnight, and do not tell me to whom your daughters are going to be married. I suppose —— borrows the watchman's coat, and cries the hours up and down Stratford-place. How is Lord Grey? I hope you are on good terms with that eminent statesman, for you never mention his name.

I am delighted with Hume and Creevy. You will have the goodness to excuse me, but I am a Jacobin. I confess it, with tears in my eyes; and I have struggled in secret against this dreadful propensity, to a

degree of which your loyal mind can have no idea. Do not mention my frailty even to my friend Lady Georgiana Morpeth, but pity me, and employ a few minutes every day in converting me.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

197.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Taunton, Aug. 7th, 1821.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have travelled all across the country with my family, to see my father, now eighty-two years of age. I wish, at such an age, you, and all like you, may have as much enjoyment of life; more, you can hardly have at any age. My father is one of the very few people I have ever seen improved by age. He is become careless, indulgent, and anacreontic.

I shall proceed to write a review of Scarlett's Poor Bill, and of Keppel Craven's Tour, according to the license you granted me; not for the number about to come, but for the number after that. The review of the first will be very short, and that of the second not long. Length, indeed, is not what you have to accuse *me* of. The above-mentioned articles, with perhaps Wilks's Sufferings of the Protestants in the South of France, and the Life of Suard, will constitute my contribution for the number after the next (*i.e.* the 71st).

The wretchedness of the poor in this part of the country is very afflicting. The men are working for one shilling per day, all the year round; and if a man have only three children, he receives no relief from the parish, so that five human beings are supported for

little more than tenpence a day. They are evidently a dwindling and decaying race; nor should I be the least surprised if a plague in the shape of typhus fever broke out here.

Do me the favour to remember me to all my friends, and to number amongst those who are sincerely and affectionately attached to you,

SYDNEY SMITH.

I beg my kind regards to Mrs. Jeffrey, and to the little tyrant who rules the family.

198.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Lydiard, Taunton, August, 1821.

Dear Davenport,

Your letter followed, and found me here this day. You are right to see Dugald Stewart. I have seen nothing of him for ten or twelve years, but am very glad to give him such a token of my regard and good-will as the introduction in question. Read the letter, blush, seal, and deliver!

There will be some distress for a year or two, but it will soon be over. Lay aside your Whiggish delusions of ruin; learn to look the prosperity of the country in the face, and bear it as well as you can.

The price of labour here all the year round is one shilling a day, and no parish relief unless the applicant has four children. The country is beautiful, and the common arts of life as they were in the Heptarchy.

Ever yours, dear Davenport, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

199.] To the Countess Grey.

Foston, Sept. 16th, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

How do you all do? Have you got the iron back? Have you put it up? Does it make the chimney worse than before? for this is the general result of all improvements recommended by friends.

A very wet harvest here; but I have saved all my corn by injecting large quantities of fermented liquors into the workmen, and making them work all night.

Sydney Smith.

200.] To the Countess Grey.

Foston, Nov. 1st, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

Pray tell me how you are, and if you are making a good recovery. I have long thought of writing, but feared you would be plagued by such sort of letters.

An old Aunt has died and left me an estate in London; this puts me a little at my ease, and will, in some degree, save me from the hitherto necessary, but unpleasant, practice of making sixpence perform the functions and assume the importance of a shilling.

Part of my little estate is the Guildhall Coffee-house, in King-street, Cheapside. I mean to give a ball there. Will you come?

I am very sorry for poor Sir Robert Wilson. If he has been guilty of any indiscretion, I cannot see the necessity of visiting it with so severe a punishment. So much military valour might be considered as an apology for a little civil indiscretion; but if *no* indiscretion has been committed, why, then publish in the

papers a narrative of his whole conduct, from his getting up on that day, to his lying down. Let him pledge his word for its accuracy, and challenge denial and contradiction. This would turn the tables immediately in his favour.

How is Lord Grey? Is he good friends with me? If he is, give him my very kind regards, and if he is *not;* for I never value people as they value me, but as they are valuable; so pray send me an account of yourself, and whether you have got out of sago and tapioca into rabbit and boiled chicken. God send you may be speedily advanced to a mutton-chop!

SYDNEY SMITH.

201.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Foston, Nov. 11*th*, 1821.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

Mr. —— is a very gentlemanly, sensible man, and I was sure would tolerate me. My pretensions to do well with the world are threefold:—first, I am fond of talking nonsense; secondly, I am civil; thirdly, I am brief. I may be flattering myself; but if I am not, it is not easy to get very wrong with these habits.

The steady writing of Lord ——'s frank indicates a prolonged existence of ten years. If a stroke to the *t* or a dot to the *i* were wanting, little —— might have some chance; but I do not think a single Jew out of the Twelve Tribes would lend him a farthing upon post-obits, if he had seen my Lord's writing.

Agriculture is bowed down to the ground she cultivates; the plough stands still, the steward's bag is empty, corn sells for nothing, but benevolent people

will take it off your hands for a small premium. I do not abuse their good-nature; but leave it to the natural, and now the only, animals that show any avidity for grain—the rats and mice.

We are all anxious to hear something about you, and all recommend that it should be a girl. Kind regards to your husband and the baby.

SYDNEY SMITH.

202.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 29th, 1821.

My dear Murray,

To see the spectacle of honour conferred upon a man who deserves it, and he an old friend, is a great temptation, but I cannot yield to it. I must not leave home any more this year.

In what state is the Review? Is Scott's novel out? Be so good as to ask, or say, if you know, in what odour the 'Encyclopædia Perthensis' is in Edinburgh. It has fallen to the inconceivably low price of seven guineas. I do not want an Encyclopædia for dissertations and essays, but for common information;—How is Turkey leather dyed?—What is the present state of the Levant trade? etc. etc.

How little you understand young Wedgewood! If he appears to love waltzing, it is only to catch fresh figures for cream-jugs. Depend upon it, he will have Jeffrey and you upon some of his vessels, and you will enjoy an argillaceous immortality.

The rumours of today are, that the Ministry have given way to the King, and—Lord Conyngham is to be Chamberlain. Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

203.] To Lady Mary Bennett.

Foston, Dec. 20th, 1821.

My dear Lady Mary,

In the first place I went to Lord Grey's, and stayed with them three or four days; from thence I went to Edinburgh, where I had not been for ten years. I found a noble passage into the town, and new since my time; two beautiful English chapels, two of the handsomest library-rooms in Great Britain, and a wonderful increase of shoes and stockings, streets and houses. When I lived there, very few maids had shoes and stockings, but plodded about the house with feet as big as a family Bible, and legs as large as portmanteaus. I stayed with Jeffrey. My time was spent with the Whig leaders of the Scotch bar, a set of very honest, clever men, each possessing thirty-two different sorts of wine. My old friends were glad to see me; some had turned Methodists—some had lost their teeth—some had grown very rich—some very fat—some were dying—and, alas! alas! many were dead; but the world is a coarse enough place, so I talked away, comforted some, praised others, kissed some old ladies, and passed a very riotous week.

From Edinburgh I went to Dunbar,—Lord Lauderdale's,—a comfortable house, with a noble sea-view. I was struck with the great good-nature and vivacity of his daughters.

From thence to Lambton. And here I ask, what use of wealth so luxurious and delightful as to light your house with gas? What folly to have a diamond necklace or a Correggio, and not to light your house with gas! The splendour and glory of Lambton Hall

make all other houses mean. How pitiful to submit to a farthing-candle existence, when science puts such intense gratification within your reach! Dear lady, spend all your fortune in a gas-apparatus. Better to eat dry bread by the splendour of gas, than to dine on wild beef with wax-candles; and so good-bye, dear lady.

SYDNEY SMITH.

204.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

December 30th, 1821.

My dear Jeffrey,

* * * * *

You must have had a lively time at Edinburgh from this "Beacon." But Edinburgh is rather too small for such explosions, where the conspirators and conspired against must be guests at the same board, and sleep under the same roof.

The articles upon Madame de Staël and upon Wilks's Protestants appear to me to be very good. The article upon Scotch juries is surely too long.

The 'Pirate,' I am afraid, has been scared and alarmed by the Beacon! It is certainly one of the least fortunate of Sir Walter Scott's productions. It seems now that he can write nothing without Meg Merrilies and Dominie Samson! One other such novel, and there 's an end; but who can last for ever? who ever lasted so long?

We are ruined here by an excess of bread and water. Too much rain, too much corn!

God bless you, my dear friend!

SYDNEY SMITH.

205.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

March 17th, 1822.

My dear Jeffrey,

I had written three parts in four of the review I promised you of Miss Wright's book on America, and could have put it in your hands ten days since; but your letter restricts me so on the subject of raillery, that I find it impossible to comply with your conditions. There are many passages in my review which would make the Americans very angry, and—which is more to my immediate purpose—make you very loath to publish it; and therefore, to avoid putting you in the awkward predicament of printing what you disapprove, or disappointing me, I withdraw my pretensions. I admire the Americans, and in treating of America, should praise her great institutions, and laugh at her little defects. The reasons for your extreme prudery I do not understand, nor is it necessary I should do so. I am satisfied that you are a good pilot of our literary vessel, and give you credit when I do not perceive your motives.

I am at York. Brougham is here; I have not seen him yet. Your affectionate friend,

Sydney Smith.

206.] To Mrs. Meynell.

London, May 10th, 1822.

Dear Mrs. Meynell,

I have got into all my London feelings, which come on the moment I pass Hyde-park Corner. I am languid, unfriendly, heartless, selfish, sarcastic, and inso-

lent. Forgive me, thou inhabitant of the plains, child of nature, rural woman, agricultural female! Remember what you were in Hill-street, and pardon the vices inevitable in the greatest of cities.

They take me here for an ancient country clergyman, and think I cannot see!! . . . How little they know your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

207.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, June 22nd, 1822.

My dear Jeffrey,

I understand from your letter that there only remains the time between this and the 12th of July for your stay in Edinburgh, and that then you go north; this puts a visit out of the question at present. I think, when I do come, I shall come alone: I should be glad to show Saba a little of the world, in the gay time of Edinburgh; but this is much too serious a tax upon your hospitality, and upon Mrs. Jeffrey's time and health; and so there is an end of that plan. As for myself, I have such a dislike to say No, to anybody who does me the real pleasure and favour of asking me to come and see him, that I assent, when I know that I am not quite sure of being able to carry my good intentions into execution; and so I am considered uncertain and capricious, when I really ought to be called friendly and benevolent. I will mend my manners in future, and be very cautious in making engagements. The first use I make of my new virtue is to say that I will, from time to time, come and see you in Edinburgh; but these things cannot be very fre-

quent, on account of expense, visits to London (where all my relations live), the injustice of being long away from my parish and family, my education of one of my sons here, and the penalties of the law. At the same time, I can see no reason why you do not bring Mrs. Jeffrey and your child, and pay us a visit in the long vacation. We have a large house and a large farm, and I need not say how truly happy we shall be to see you. I think you ought to do this.

Pray say, with my kind regards to Thomson, that I find it absolutely impossible to write such a review on the Cow-Pox as will satisfy either him or myself for this number. I will write a review for the next, if so please him; what sort of one it may be, the gods only know. I will write a line to Thomson. I will send you the Bishop if I can get him ready; if not, certainly for the next number, I never break my word about reviews, except when I am in London. Pray forgive me; I am sure your readers will.

I read Cockburn's speech with great pleasure. I admire, in the strongest manner, the conduct of the many upright and patriotic lawyers now at the Scotch bar, and think it a great privilege to call many of them friends; such a spectacle refreshes me in the *rattery* and scoundrelism of public life.

Allen and Fox stopped here for a day. My country neighbours had no idea who they were; I passed off Allen as the commentator on the Book of Martyrs.

Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

208.] To Lady Mary Bennett.

Foston, August, 1822.

Dear Lady Mary,

Many thanks for the venison, and say, if you please, what ought to be said to my Lord. It was excellent. I shall make a bow to Chillingham as I pass it on the stage-coach on my way to Scotland, where I am going to see my friend Jeffrey.

I have had a great run of philosophers this summer;—Dr. and Mrs. Marcet, Sir Humphry Davy and Mr. Warburton, and divers small mineralogists and chemists. Sir Humphry Davy was really very agreeable,—neither witty, eloquent, nor sublime: but reasonable and instructive.

I remember the laughing we had together at C—— House; and I thank God, who has made me poor, that he has made me merry. I think it a better gift than much wheat and bean land, with a doleful heart.

I am truly rejoiced at the recovery of Duke John; he is an honest, excellent person, full of good feelings and right opinions, and moreover a hearty laugher. I am glad to hear of the marriage of Mr. Russell with Miss ——. The manufacture of Russells is a public and important concern. Adieu!

Affectionately yours,

Sydney Smith.

209.] To Lady Mary Bennett.

Foston, Nov. 1st, 1822.

My dear Lady Mary,

You will be sorry to hear that Douglas has had bad

health ever since he went to Westminster, and has been taken thence to be nursed in a typhus fever, from which he is slowly recovering. Mrs. Sydney set off for London last week, and is likely to remain there some time; I find the state of a widower a very wretched one.

Lady —— is unwell, and expects to be confined in February. The public is indebted to every lady of fashion who brings a fresh Whig into the world.

It is a long time since you wrote to me; the process by which I discover this is amusing enough. I feel uneasy and dissatisfied; the turnips are white and globular—no blame imputable to the farm—no Dissenters, no Methodists in the parish—all right with the Church of England; and after a few minutes' reflection, I discover what it is I want, and seize upon it as the sick dog does upon the proper herb.

* * * * *

I know —— never spares me, but that is no reason why I should not spare him; I had rather be the ox than the butcher.

Write to me immediately: I feel it necessary to my constitution; and I am, dear Lady,

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

210.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

November, 1822.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

I think Adam Blair beautifully done—quite beautifully. It is not every lady who confesses she reads it; but if you had been silent upon the subject, or even

if you had denied it, you would have done yourself very little good with me.

Our house is full of company: Miss Fox and Miss Vernon; Mr. and Mrs. Spottiswode, with their children; and Captain Gordon, an old and esteemed friend of mine.

I hear from all your neighbours that you are much liked, but that they should not have supposed you had written so many articles in the Edinburgh Review as you are known to have done.

God bless you, my dear friend! Keep for me always a little corner of regard.

SYDNEY SMITH.

211.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston.

My dear Lady Mary,

I shall be obliged to you to procure for me Mr. Rogers's verses upon the Temple of the Graces at Woburn: I thought them very pretty, and should be glad to possess them.

Lord and Lady Granville have been staying at Castle Howard, where we met them. Whatever other merits they have, they have at least that of being extremely civil and well-bred; good qualities which, being put into action every day, make a great mass of merit in the course of life.

I am glad you liked what I said of Mrs. Fry. She is very unpopular with the clergy: examples of living, active virtue disturb our repose, and give birth to distressing comparisons: we long to burn her alive.

Who knows his secret sins? I find, upon reference to Collins's Peerage, I have been in the habit for some months past of mis-spelling Lord Tankerville's name; and you have left me in this state of ignorance and imperfection, from which I was awakened by a loud scream from Mrs. Sydney, who cast her eye upon the direction of the letter, and saw the habitual sin of which I have been guilty.

On account of the scarcity of water, many respectable families in this part of the world wash their faces only every other day. It is a real distress, and increasing rather than diminishing. God bless you!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

212.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

My dear friend,

I am not in London, but on my way to it, at Holland House. The person taken for me is a very fat clergyman, but not I. So singular a letter as yours I never saw. You say, "I shall be on the banks of the Thames till Tuesday, after that at C—— House, but before Tuesday you will find me at the Privy Gardens." Can you thus multiply yourself? If you can, pray let me have a copy of you at Foston; and pray, dear Lady Mary, let it be well done, and very much like the original; not a hasty sketch, but minute;—and take no liberties with the pencil. The great merit of a copy is fidelity.

I should have been glad to renew my acquaintance with the Edgeworths.

SYDNEY SMITH.

213.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

My dear Lady Mary,

Having written what I had to write on Small Pox and the Bishop of Peterborough, I wish to discuss Mr. Biggs's Report of Botany Bay. Mr. Bennett was so good as to offer me the loan of his Report; if he remains in the same gracious intentions toward me, will you have the goodness to desire him to send it by return of post?

I have been making a long visit to my friends in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Their wealth and prosperity know no bounds: I do not mean only the Philippi, but of all who ply the loom. They talk of raising corps of manufacturers to keep the country gentlemen in order, and to restrain the present Jacobinism of the plough; the Royal Corduroys—the First Regiment of Fustian—the Bombazine Brigade, etc. etc.

I have given the Bishop of Peterborough a good dressing. What right has anybody to ask anybody *eighty-seven* questions? and tell me (this is only one question) what agreeable books I am to read. I hear of a great deal of ruin in distant counties; there is none here, but then the soil is good.

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

214.] To Lady Wenlock.

Foston, Dec. 11th, 1822.

My dear Madam,

We will keep ourselves clear of all engagements the first week of the new year, and in readiness to obey your summons for any day of it. I care not whom I meet, provided it is not Sir ——, and to invite anybody to meet him would be a very strong measure. Sir William and Lady Gordon are very agreeable people, and indeed I should be ashamed of myself if I were not a good deal captivated by her; but upon that point I have nothing to reproach myself with. Lewis, I suppose, was hastening on to the Treasury, with the accumulation of guilty jobs that he had discovered in Scotland; he will make a very faithful servant to the public for two or three years, beyond which period it would be a little unreasonable perhaps to expect the duration of his public virtues.

I remain, my dear Madam, very truly yours,

Sydney Smith.

215.] To the Countess Grey.

Foston, Jan. 31st, 1823.

Dear Lady Grey,

About half after five in the evening (three feet of snow on the ground, and all communication with Christendom cut off) a chaise and four drove up to the parsonage, and from it issued Sir James and his appendages. His letter of annunciation arrived the following morning. Miss Mackintosh brought me your kind reproaches for never having written to you;

to which I replied, "Lord and Lady Grey know very well that I have a sincere regard and affection and respect for them, and they will attribute my silence only to my reluctance to export the stupidity in which I live."

I am so very modest a man, that I am never afraid of giving my opinion upon any subject. Pray tell me if you understand this sort of modesty. There certainly *is* such a species of that virtue, and I claim it. But whether my claim is just or unjust, my opinion is, that there will be some repeals of heavy taxes, and a great deal of ill-humour,—probably a Whig Administration for a year,—no reform, no revolution: if no Whig Administration, Canning in for about two years, till they have formed their plans for flinging him overboard: Canning to be conciliatory and laudatory for about three months, and then to relapse: prices to rise after next harvest.

You have read 'Peveril;' a moderate production, between his best and his worst; rather agreeable than not.

I hope you have read and admired Doblado. To get a Catholic priest who would turn King's evidence is a prodigious piece of good luck; but it may damage the Catholic question.

Lord Grey has, I hear, been pretty well. I was called up to London a second time this year, and went to Bowood, where I spent a very agreeable week with the Hollands, Luttrell, Rogers, etc. It is a very cheerful, agreeable, comfortable house.

We have a good deal of company in our little parsonage this year;—all pure Whigs, if I may include —— in this number. That young man will be no-

thing but agreeable; — enough for any man, if his name were not ——, and if the country did not seem to have acquired an hereditary right to his talents and services.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Kindest regards to Lord Grey and your children, from your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Mackintosh had seventy volumes in his carriage! None of the glasses would draw up or let down, but one; and he left his hat behind him at our house.

216.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Foston, Feb. 18th, 1823.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

You are quite right about happiness. I would always lay a wager in favour of its being found among persons who spend their time dully rather than in gaiety. Gaiety—English gaiety—is seldom come at lawfully; friendship, or propriety, or principle, are sacrificed to obtain it; we cannot produce it without more effort than it is worth; our destination is, to look vacant, and to sit silent.

My articles in the last number are, the attack on the Bishop of Peterborough, and on Small Pox. If you do not know what to think of the first, take my word that it is merited. Of the last you may think what you please, provided you vaccinate Master and Miss Meynell.

I am afraid we shall go to war: I am sorry for it. I see every day in the world a thousand acts of op-

pression which I should like to resent, but I cannot afford to play the Quixote. Why are the English to be the sole vindicators of the human race? Ask Mr. Meynell how many persons there are within fifteen miles of him who deserve to be horsewhipped, and who would be very much improved by such a process. But every man knows he must keep down his feelings, and endure the spectacle of triumphant folly and tyranny.

Adieu, my dear old friend. I shall be very glad to see you again, and to witness that happiness which is your lot, and your *due;* two circumstances not always united. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

217.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, York, Feb. 19*th*, 1823.

My dear Lady Grey,

In seeing my handwriting again so soon, you will say that your attack upon me for my indisposition to letter-writing has been more successful than you wished it to be; but I cannot help saying a word about war.

For God's sake, do not drag me into another war! I am worn down, and worn out, with crusading and defending Europe, and protecting mankind; I *must* think a little of myself. I am sorry for the Spaniards —I am sorry for the Greeks—I deplore the fate of the Jews; the people of the Sandwich Islands are groaning under the most detestable tyranny; Bagdad is oppressed—I do not like the present state of the

Delta—Thibet is not comfortable. Am I to fight for all these people? The world is bursting with sin and sorrow. Am I to be champion of the Decalogue, and to be eternally raising fleets and armies to make all men good and happy? We have just done saving Europe, and I am afraid the consequence will be, that we shall cut each other's throats. No war, dear Lady Grey!—no eloquence; but apathy, selfishness, common sense, arithmetic! I beseech you, secure Lord Grey's sword and pistols, as the housekeeper did Don Quixote's armour. If there is another war, life will not be worth having. I will go to war with the King of Denmark if he is impertinent to you, or does any injury to Howick; but for no other cause.

"May the vengeance of Heaven" overtake all the Legitimates of Verona! but, in the present state of rent and taxes, they must be *left* to the vengeance of Heaven. I allow fighting in such a cause to be a luxury; but the business of a prudent, sensible man, is to guard against luxury.

I shall hope to be in town in the course of the season, and that I shall find your health re-established, and your fortune unimpaired by the depredations of Lady Ponsonby at piquette. To that excellent lady do me the favour to present my kind remembrances and regards.

'Doblado's Letters' are by Blanco White, of Holland House. They are very valuable for their perfect authenticity, as well as for the ability with which they are written. They are upon the state of Spain and the Catholic religion, previous to the present revolution.

The line of bad Ministers is unbroken. If the

present will not do, others will be found as illiberal and unfriendly to improvement. These things being so, I turn my attention to dinners, in which I am acquiring every day better notions, and losing prejudices and puerilities; but I retain all my prejudices in favour of my hosts of Howick, and in these points my old-age confirms the opinions of my youth.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

218.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

March 3rd, 1823.

Dear Allen,

I beg your pardon for my mistake, but I thought you had written constantly in the Review; and, so thinking, I knew Spanish subjects to be familiar to you.

Upon the absurd and unprincipled conduct of the French there can be but one opinion; still I would rather the nascent liberties of Spain were extinguished than go to war to defend them. I am afraid these sentiments will displease you, but I cannot help it. We fight in this case either from feeling or prudence. If from feeling, why not for Greece? why not for Naples? why not for the Spanish colonies? If from prudence, better that Spain and Portugal were under the government of Viceroy Blacas or Chateaubriand, than that we should go to war.

I object to your dying so soon as you propose; I hate to lose old and good friends. I am not sure that we could find the same brains over again. I am not

churchman enough to wish you away. We will live and laugh for thirty years to come. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

219.] To LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, July 11th, 1823.

Dear Lady Holland,

Hannibal would not enter Capua. I have got back all my rural virtues. Would it be prudent to demoralize myself twice in a season by re-entering the Metropolis? I will stop short at the Green Man at Barnet, and venture no further. Yours,

S. S.

220.] To LADY HOLLAND.

October 1st, 1823.

Dear Lady Holland,

I was prepared to set off for London, when a better account arrived from Dr. Bond. I think you mistake Bond's character in supposing he could be influenced by partridges. He is a man of very independent mind, with whom pheasants at least, or perhaps turkeys, are necessary.

* * * * *

Nothing can be more disgusting than an Oratorio. How absurd, to see five hundred people fiddling like madmen about the Israelites in the Red Sea! Lord Morpeth pretends to say he was pleased, but I see a great change in him since the music-meeting. Pray tell Luttrell he did wrong not to come to the music. It tired me to death; it would have pleased him. He

is a melodious person, and much given to sacred music. In his fits of absence I have heard him hum the Hundredth Psalm! (Old Version).

Ever yours, dear Lady,

SYDNEY SMITH.

221.] To LADY HOLLAND.

October 19th, 1823.

We have been visiting country squires. I got on very well, and am reckoned popular. We came last from ——— ———. Mrs. ——— and I begin to be better acquainted, and she improves. I hope *I* do; though, as I profess to live with open doors and windows, I am seen (by those who think it worth while to look at me) as well in five minutes as in five years.

I distinguished myself a good deal at M. A. Taylor's in dressing salads; pray tell Luttrell this. I have thought about salads much, and will talk over the subject with you and Mr. Luttrell when I have the pleasure to find you together.

I am rejoiced at the Duke of Norfolk's success, and should have liked to see Lord Holland's joy. A few scraps of victory are thrown to the wise and just in the long battle of life.

* * * * *

I could have told before that bark would not do for the Duke of Bedford. What *will* do for him is, carelessness, amusement, fresh air, and the most scrupulous management of sleep, food, and exercise; also, there must be friction, and mercury, and laughing.

The Duchess wrote me a very amusing note in

answer to mine, for which I am much obliged. All duchesses seem agreeable to clergymen; but she would really be a very clever, agreeable woman, if she were married to a neighbouring vicar; and I should often call upon her.

Dear Lady Holland, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

222.] *Written on the first page of a Letter of his youngest Daughter to her friend Miss ——.*

Foston, 1823.

Dear little Gee,

Many thanks for your kind and affectionate letter. I cannot recollect what you mean by our kindness; all that I remember is, that you came to see us, and we all thought you very pleasant, good-hearted, and strongly infected with Lancastrian tones and pronunciations. God bless you, dear child! I shall always be very fond of you, till you grow tall, and speak without an accent, and marry some extremely disagreeable person.

Ever very affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

223.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

About 1823.

* * * * *

No pecuniary embarrassments equal to the embarrassments of a professed wit, like Mr. ——:—an eternal demand upon him for pleasantry, and a consciousness, on his part, of a limited income of the facetious;

the disappointment of his creditors,—the importunity of duns,—the tricks, forgeries, and false coin he is forced to pay instead of gold!

Pity a wit, and remember with affection your stupid friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

224.] To EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, Aug. 28th, 1824.

My dear Davenport,

I did not write one syllable of Hall's book. When first he showed me his manuscript, I told him it would not do; it was too witty and brilliant. He then wrote it over again, and I told him it would do very well indeed; and it *has* done very well. He is a very painstaking person.

I am very sorry I have not a single copy left of my first Assize Sermon. I thought I had sent you a copy: I would immediately send you another, if I had one to send.

You will see an article of mine in this Review, No. 80, upon America. Lady Suffolk's Letters, in No. 79, were reviewed by Agar Ellis.

I hear your sister is going with a multitude of Berrys and Lindsays to Scotland. I hope she will be retained if we get leave to visit your papa.

Yours, my dear Davenport, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

225.] To FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

September 23rd, 1824.

My dear Jeffrey,

If you mean that my article itself is light and scanty,

I agree to that; reminding you that lightness and flimsiness are my line of reviewing. If you mean that my notice of M——'s book is scanty, that also is true; for I think the book very ill done: still, it is done by an honest, worthy man, who has neither bread nor butter. How can I be true under such circumstances?

SYDNEY SMITH.

226.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

October 1st, 1824.

My dear Davenport,

I am very sorry there should be any mistake as to the day; but in the negotiation between the higher powers—Mrs. Davenport and Mrs. Sydney—the day mentioned was from the 15th to dinner, till the morning of the 17th. You will smile at this precision; but I find, from long experience, that I am never so well received, as when I state to my host the brief duration of his sorrows and embarrassments. Upon the same principle, young speakers conciliate favour by declaring they do not mean to detain the House a long time.

Great expectations are formed of your speech. The report is, that you apostrophize the Shades of Hampden and Brutus. —— has a beautiful passage on the effects of freedom upon calico. Sir John Stanley will take that opportunity of refuting Locke and Malebranche; it will be a great day. J—— W—— will speak of economy from the epergne.

SYDNEY SMITH.

227.] To the Countess Grey.

Foston, Oct. 23rd, 1824.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am just come from a visit to Lord Fitzwilliam, that best of old noblemen! I was never there before. Nothing could exceed his kindness and civility. The author of the 'Paradise Lost' was there also. I am surprised that I had heard so little of the magnificence of Wentworth House. It is one of the finest buildings I ever saw—twice as great a front as Castle Howard! And how magnificent is the hall!

I took Fouché's Memoirs for genuine; but I have nothing to refer to but ignorant impressions.

Dear Lady M——! I have more tenderness for Lady M—— than it would be ecclesiastical to own; but don't mention it to Lord Grey, who is fond of throwing a ridicule upon the cloth. In the meantime, Lady M—— is the perfection of all that is agreeable and pleasant in society.

I have sent to Bishop Doyle a list of errors commonly and unjustly imputed to the Catholics, and more and more believed for want of proper contradiction, requesting him to publish and circulate a denial of them signed by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. It would be a very useful paper for general circulation. He writes word it shall be done. God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

Sydney Smith.

228.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Foston, Nov. 10th, 1826.

My dear Jeffrey,

I will send you a sheet for this number upon allow-

ing Counsel for Prisoners in cases of Felony. Your review of the Bumpists destroys them, but it is tremendously long for such a subject. I cannot tell what the Scotch market may require, but Bumpology has always been treated with great contempt among men of sense in England, and the machinery you have employed for its destruction will excite surprise; though everybody must admit it is extremely well done.

A good article upon the Church of England, and upon the Court of France, and in general a very good number. Ever, my dear Jeffrey, most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

229.] To EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

November, 1824.

My dear Davenport,

Political economy has become, in the hands of Malthus and Ricardo, a school of metaphysics. All seem agreed what is to be done; the contention is, how the subject is to be divided and defined. Meddle with no such matters. Write the lives of the principal Italian poets, of about the same length as Macdiarmid's 'Lives,' mingling criticism and translation with biography: this is the task I assign you.

The Berrys are slowly rising in this part of the world; I hear of them eighty miles off, and their track begins to be pointed out. People are out on the hills with their glasses. I have written to ask them to Foston. Our visit succeeded very well at Knowsley. The singing of the children was admired, and we all found *Derbus* and *Derbe* very kind and attentive. What principally struck me was the magnificence of

the dining-room, and the goodness of heart both of the master and mistress;—to which add, the ugliness of the country!

I am sorry to hear you are likely to have the gout again. Let it be a comfort to you to reflect, that I, who have no gout, have not an acre of land upon the face of the earth.

SYDNEY SMITH.

No Roman vase: we are not worthy—it is out of our line. I have read over your letter again. If the object in writing essays on political economy is to amuse yourself, of course there can be no objection; but my opinion is (and I will never deceive in literary matters), you will do the other *much better*. If you have a mind for a frolic over the mountains, you know how glad I shall be to see you.

230.] TO LORD CREWE.

About 1824.

Dear Lord Crewe,

I cannot help writing a line to thank you for your obliging note. I hope one day or other (wind and weather permitting) to pay my respects to Lady Crewe and you, at Crewe Hall, of goodly exterior, and, like a York pie, at this season filled with agreeable and interesting contents.

To Mr. and Mrs. Cunliffe my kind remembrances, if you please. I cannot trust myself with a message to Mrs. Hopwood, but shall be very much obliged to your Lordship to frame one, suitable to my profession, worthy of its object, and not forgetful of my feelings; let it be clerical, elevated, and tender.

P——'s single turnips turned out extremely well; he is about to publish a tract "On the Effect of Solitude on Vegetables."

I remain, dear Lord Crewe, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

231.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Foston, July 14th, 1825.

* * * * *

We stayed two days with Lord Essex, and were delighted with Cashiobury. I think you and I might catch some fish there next summer. He darkens his house too much with verandahs, and there are no hot luncheons; in return, he is affable, open-hearted, unaffected, and good-humoured in the highest degree. I am sorry I never went there before. I will always go in future when I can, and when I am asked.

The northern world is profoundly peaceful and prosperous; the reverse of everything we have prophesied in the Edinburgh Review for twenty years.

SYDNEY SMITH.

232.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

August 25th, 1825.

* * * * *

—— has been extremely well received, and is much liked. His nature is fine: he wants ease, which will come; and indiscretion, which will never come.

I had a visit from the Earl of —— to my great surprise. I must do him the justice to say that nothing could be more agreeable and more amiable. To him succeeded some Genevese philosophers—not bad in.

the country, where there is much time and few people: but they would not do in London.

My sermon, which I send you, was printed at the request of the English Catholic Committee.

I do not like Madame Bertin: I suspect all such books. You will read a review of mine, of Bentham's 'Fallacies,' in the next Edinburgh Review.

The general report here is, that —— is to marry the King of Prussia. I call it rather an ambitious than a happy match. It will neither please Lord Holland, nor Allen, nor Whishaw.

Your sincere and affectionate

SYDNEY SMITH.

233.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Newcastle, Oct. 4th, 1825.

Dear Lady Grey,

I have been on a visit to Brougham, where I met Mackintosh. We had a loyal week, and spoke respectfully of all existing authorities. A pretty place; Brougham very pleasant; Mackintosh much improved in health. Mrs. Brougham is a very fine old lady, whom I took to very much.

From Brougham I went to Howard of Corby,—an excellent man, believing in the Pope; and from thence I proceeded to Ord's, over the most heaven-forgotten country I ever saw. Ord lives in this very beautiful, inaccessible place at the end of the world, very comfortably.

I now write from a vile inn at Newcastle, where I can get neither beef, veal, nor sealing-wax.

I have a great prejudice against soldiers, but thought

Mr. —— agreeable, and with a good deal of humour.

I am very much pleased that the Howards intend to live on at Castle Howard. They are very excellent people, and I am most fortunate in having such neighbours.

S. S.

234.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Foston, 1825.

My dear Jeffrey,

I addressed a letter to you ten days since, mentioning some subjects which, if agreeable to you, I would discuss in the Edinburgh Review. I know the value and importance of your time enough to make me sorry to intrude upon you again; but the printer, you know, is imperious in his demands, and limited in his time. Will you excuse me for requesting as early an answer as you can? It must be to you, as I am sure it is to me, a real pleasure to see so many improvements taking place, and so many abuses destroyed;—abuses upon which you, with cannon and mortars, and I with sparrow-shot, have been playing for so many years.

Mrs. Sydney always sends you reproaches for not coming to see her as you pass and repass; but I always reply to her, that the loadstone has no right to reproach the needle for not coming from a certain distance. The answer of the needle is, "Attract me, and I will come; I am passive." "Alas! it is beyond my power," says the magnet. "Then don't blame me," says the needle.

Sydney Smith.

235.] To the Countess Grey.

January 29th, 1826.

My dear Lady Grey,

Terrible work in Yorkshire with the Pope! I fight with the beasts at Ephesus every day!

I hope you have lost no money by the failures all around you. I have been very fortunate. In future I mean to keep my money in a hole in the garden.

This week I publish a pamphlet on the Catholic question, with my name to it. There is such an uproar here, that I think it is gallant, and becoming a friend of Lord Grey's (if he will forgive the presumption of my giving myself that appellation), to turn out and take a part in the affray. I would send you a copy, but it would cost you three times as much as to buy it. But the best way is neither to buy nor receive it. What a detestable subject!—stale, threadbare, and exhausted; but ancient errors cannot be met with fresh refutations.

They say it is very cold, but I am in a perfectly warm house; and when I go out, am in a perfectly warm great-coat: the seasons are nothing to me.

I wish Lord Howick would come and see me, as he passes and repasses: I am afraid he doubts of my Whig principles, and thinks I am not for the people. You know that Dr. Willis opposes Beaumont for the county of Northumberland. The sheriff has provided himself with a strait waistcoat.

How did you like Lord Morpeth's answer? It seems to me modest, liberal, and rational. It is very generally approved here. It is something, that a young man of his station has taken the oaths to the good cause.

Pray tell all your family the last person burnt in England for religion was Weightman, at Lichfield, by the Protestant Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, in the reign of James the First, 1612. God save the King! From your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

236.] TO THE EARL GREY.

February 16th, 1826.

My dear Lord Grey,

There appeared, in the 'Monthly Magazine' (January), and was thence copied into several papers, '*A Letter of Advice to the Clergy, by the Rev. Sydney Smith.*' It is a mere forgery; and I have ascertained that the author is a Mr. Nathaniel Ogle, of Southampton. May I beg the favour of you to inform me who Mr. Nathaniel Ogle is? I thought Nat. Ogle, the eldest son of the Dean, had been dead, and that the estate had passed to John. If you know anything of this gentleman, I should be obliged to you to inform me, and also to send me the address of the Rev. Henry Ogle.—Any attack of wit or argument is fair; but to publish letters in another man's name is *contra bonos mores*, and cannot be allowed. I hope you are well, and bring with you to town a lady as well as yourself.

I have published a pamphlet in favour of the Pope, with my name, which I would send, but that it would cost you more than its price, being above weight, and *sine pondere*: but I cannot help writing; *facit indignatio versus*. Most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

237.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Foston, Feb. 28th, 1826.

My dear Jeffrey,

I can make nothing of Craniology, for this reason: they are taking many different species of the same propensity, and giving to them each a bump. Now I believe that if nature meant to give any bumps at all, it must have been to the genus, and not to the species and varieties; because the human skull could not contain outward signs of a tenth part of the various methods in which any propensity may act. But to state what are original propensities, and to trace out the family or genealogy of each, is a task requiring great length, patience, and metaphysical acuteness; and Combe's book is too respectably done to be taken by storm.

Instead of this, I will send you, as you seem pressed, the review of 'Granby,' a novel of great merit. Stop me, by return of post, if this book is engaged, and believe me always most truly yours,

Sydney Smith.

238.] To — Fletcher, Esq.

York, March 25th, 1826.

My dear Sir,

I am truly glad that any effort of mine in the cause of liberality and toleration meets with your approbation. You have lived a life of honour and honesty, truckling to no man, and disguising no opinion you entertained. I think myself much honoured by your praise. I will take care you have a copy of my speech as soon as I return to Foston from York, where I am

now staying for a short course of noise, bad air, and dirt.

My letter is by this time nearly out of print: a thousand copies have disappeared, and I am printing another thousand; and I will take care you have one *from the author*, as a mark of his sincere regard and respect.

God bless you, my dear Sir! I wish you a fertile garden, a warm summer, limbs without pain, and a tranquil mind. The remembrance of an honourable and useful life you have secured for yourself already.

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

239.] TO MRS. SYDNEY SMITH.

Ship Inn, Dover, April 14th*, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I have arrived safely at Dover, and shall cross to-morrow in the Government packet. You must direct to me at Messrs. Laffitte and Co., Paris. You need only write once a week, except in case of accidents; I shall

* "These letters, perhaps, are not of sufficient interest to be worthy of general attention. Yet they show the pleasure he took in imparting to the absent the daily incidents occurring to him in a new place, and the promise gratuitously given, *and never once departed from*, that he would write every day. He well knew how eagerly these letters would be read at home. The looking at everything with a view to the enjoyment he should have in taking his family abroad at some future time,—his mindfulness of all the little commissions given him,—show him to have been as full of unostentatious domestic virtue, as he was conspicuous for that which is deemed greater and nobler.—C. A. S."—*Note to the Letters from Paris, by Mrs. Sydney Smith.*

The brief extracts which have been selected from the letters writ-

write, as I told you, every day. I think, *when we go to Paris*, I shall set off in the steamboat from London.

The road from London to Dover is very beautiful. I am much pleased with Dover. They have sunk a deep shaft in the cliff, and made a staircase, by which the top of the cliff is reached with great ease—or at least what they call great ease, which means the loss of about a pound of liquid flesh, and as much puffing and blowing as would grind a bushel of wheat. The view from the cliff, I need not tell you, is magnificent.

I dare say a number of acquaintances will turn up. You shall have an exact account of the contents of the steam-packet. God bless you all!

S. S.

240.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Calais, April 15th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I am writing from a superb bedroom and dressing-room, at Dessein's. I wanted to order dinner, and a very long *carte*, of which I understood nothing, was given me; so I ordered "Potage aux choux" (God knows what it is), "Pommes de terre au naturel," and "Veau au naturel." I am afraid I shall have a fortune to pay for it.

I have been walking all about Calais, and am quite

ten by Mr. Sydney Smith to his wife, during his first visit to Paris, are not inserted for their brilliancy, nor because they inform us of anything about Paris with which we are not familiar. I think them precious, as showing his fresh and open sense of enjoyment, and his eager desire to share it with his family. The words in italics were underlined in the copies made by Mrs. Sydney, and so I have left them: I would not rob them of the emphasis given to them by her proud and grateful affection.—Ed.

delighted with it. It contains about half the population of York. What pleases me, is the taste and ingenuity displayed in the shops, and the good manners and politeness of the people. Such is the state of manners, that you appear almost to have quitted a land of barbarians.

I wish you could see me, with my wood fire, and my little bedroom, and fine sitting-room. My baggage has passed the Custom-house without any difficulty; therefore, so far, my journey has answered perfectly.

You shall all see France; I am resolved upon that. God bless you all!

S. S.

241.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris: no date.

Dearest Wife,

My dinner at Calais was superb; I never ate so good a dinner, nor was in so good an hotel; but I paid dear. I amused myself that evening with walking about the streets of Calais, which pleased me exceedingly. It is quite another world, and full of the greatest entertainment. *I most sincerely hope, one day or another, to conduct you all over it; the thought of doing so is one of my greatest pleasures in travelling.* I was struck immediately with, and have continued to notice ever since, the extreme propriety and civility of everybody, even the lowest person; I have not seen a cobbler who is not better bred than an English gentleman. I slept well on a charming bed, after having drunk much better tea than I could have met with in England.

I found the inns excellent everywhere on the road, and the cookery admirable. The agriculture appeared to me extremely good; the instruments very clumsy, and the sheep, cows, and pigs miserable. The horses admirable for agriculture and seven miles an hour. At Paris I drove to several hotels and could not get admission; at last I found rooms at the Hôtel D'Orvilliers. I dined in a café more superb than anything we have an idea of in the way of coffee-house, and I send you my bill. A dinner like this would have cost thirty shillings in London. At this coffee-house I was accosted by Binda, who was dining there. My dinner was not good, for, not knowing what to choose, and not understanding the language of the kitchen, I chose the first thing upon the list, and chose badly; it is reckoned the best coffee-house in Paris.

In the morning I changed my lodgings to the Hôtel Virginie, Rue St. Honoré, No. 350. My sitting-room is superb; my bedroom, close to it, very good; there is a balcony which looks upon the street,—as busy as Cheapside;—in short, I am as comfortably lodged as possible: I pay at the rate of £2. 2*s.* per week. I am exceedingly pleased with everything I have seen at the hotel, *and it will be, I think, here we shall lodge.* God bless you all!

SYDNEY SMITH.

242.] To MRS. SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 19th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

* * * * *

I called on the Duke of Bedford, who took me for

Sir Sidney Smith, and refused me; I met him afterwards in the street.

I have bought a coat-of-arms on a seal for six shillings, which will hereafter be the coat-of-arms of the family; this letter is sealed with it.*

I called upon Dumont, who says that our hospitality to his friends has made us very popular at Geneva, and that M. Chauvet gave a very entertaining account of us.

Paris is very badly lighted at nights, and the want of a trottoir is a very great evil. The equipages are much less splendid and less numerous than in England. The Champs Élysées are very poor and bad; but, for the two towns, in spite of all these inconveniences, believe me, there is not the smallest possibility of a comparison; Regent-street is a perfect misery, compared with the finest parts of Paris. I think, in general, that the display of the shops is finer here than in London.

Of course my opinions, from my imperfect information, are likely to change every day; but at present I am inclined to think that I ought to have gone, and *that we will go*, to the Boulevards.

There are no table-cloths in the coffee-houses; this annoys me; (at least none for breakfast.)

I am very well; still a little heated with the journey. I have written regularly every day. God bless you all!

SYDNEY SMITH.

April 20th.

The Duke of Bedford wrote me a note, saying there had been some mistake on the day I called,—that I

* *Vide* Memoir, p. 205.

had been mistaken for my namesake,—"*as much unlike you as possible.*" This note was carried to *Sir* Sidney, who opened it, read it, and returned it to me, with an apology for his indiscretion, offering to take me to some shows, and begging we might be acquainted.

S. S

243.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, April 21st, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I breakfasted yesterday with Miss Fox and Miss Vernon. I met an ancient member of the National Assembly—a M. Girardin, a sensible, agreeable man, who gave me an introduction today to the Assembly, of which I mean to avail myself.

I dined with Lord Holland; there was at table Barras, the ex-Director, in whose countenance I immediately discovered all the signs of blood and cruelty which distinguished his conduct. I found out however, at the end of dinner, that it was not Barras, but M. de Barante, an historian and man of letters, who, I believe, has never killed anything greater than a flea. The Duke de Broglie was there; I am to breakfast with him tomorrow. In the afternoon came Casimir Perrier, one of the best speakers in the Assembly, and Dupin, a lawyer. I saw young Abercrombie here, the Secretary of Legation.

Lady Granville has invited me to her ball, which is to be, as they say, very splendid.

I have hired a *laquais de place*, who abridges my labour, saves my time, and therefore money. I am

assailed by visitants, particularly by Sir Sidney Smith, who is delighted with my letter to him, and shows it about everywhere.

God bless you all!

S. S.

244.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, April 22nd, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

From Montmartre there is a noble panorama of Paris. From thence I went to the Assembly of Deputies,—a dark, disagreeable hall. I was placed so far from them that I could not hear. They got up and read their speeches, and read them like very bad parsons. I dined at seven o'clock at the Ambassador's; Miss Fox carried me there. The company consisted of Lord and Lady Granville, Lady Hardy (Sir Charles Hardy's lady), Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, Lady C. Wortley, Mr. Sneyd, Mr. Abercrombie, and two or three attachés; and in the afternoon came a profusion of French duchesses,—in general very good-looking, well-dressed people, with more form and ceremony than belongs to English duchesses. The house was less splendid than I expected, though I fancy I did not see the state apartments. There is an assembly there this morning, to see the greenhouses and gardens, to which I am invited: you know my botanic skill—it will be called into action this morning; tomorrow I am going to a *déjeúner à la fourchette* with the Duke de Broglie.

I have renewed my acquaintance with young ——.

There is something in him, but he does not know how little it is; he is much admired as a beauty.

God bless you all! I have written every day.

S. S.

245.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, April 23rd, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I went yesterday, with Dumont, to breakfast with the Duke de Broglie. The company consisted of the Duke, the Duchess, the tutor, young Rocca, M. de Staël, brother to the Duchess, and the children. The Duke seems to be a very amiable, sensible man. He and M. de Staël are going to make a tour, and I think will come to see us in Yorkshire.

After breakfast I went to see the palace of the Duke of Orléans. The pictures are numerous, but principally of the French school, and not good; the rooms in which there are no pictures are most magnificent; in short, *magnificence* must be scratched out of our dictionary. I then went to a *déjeûner à la fourchette* at the Ambassador's, where there was a numerous assembly of French and English; it was a very pretty sight, in a very pretty garden.

I dined with Lord Bath. In the evening we went to see Mdlle. Mars, the great French actress. Her *forte* is comedy; she seems to excel in such parts as Mrs. Jordan excelled in, and has her sweetness of voice. She is very old and ugly; she excels also in genteel comedy, as Miss Farren did. I certainly think her a very considerable actress.

After the play I went to Lady Holland's, where

was Humboldt, the great traveller,—a lively, pleasant, talkative man.

I like M. Gallois very much; he is a truly benevolent, amiable man. I have not yet had a visit from the hero Sir Sidney Smith; it is his business to call upon me, and I am not anxious to make acquaintance with my countryman.

God bless you! I have written every day, but have received no letters.

S. S.

246.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, April 27th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

Yesterday was a very bad, draggling day, and Paris is not pleasant at such a time. I went to the King's Library, containing four hundred thousand volumes; they are lent out, even the manuscripts, and, I am afraid, sometimes lost and stolen. It is an enormous library, but nothing to strike the eye. I then saw the Palais du Prince de Condé, which is not worth seeing.

I dined with Lord Holland, who is better. The famous Cuvier was there, and in the evening came Prince Talleyrand, who renewed his acquaintance with me, and inquired very kindly for my brother. I mean to call upon him. The French manners are quite opposite to ours: the stranger is introduced, and I find he calls upon the native first. This is very singular, and, I think, contrary to reason.

In the evening I went to Lady Granville's ball; nothing could be more superb. It is by all accounts

the first house in Paris. I met there crowds of English. Madame de Bourke, the widow of the late Danish Ambassador, renewed her acquaintance with me. The prettiest girl in the room was Miss Rumbold, the daughter-in-law of Sir Sidney Smith.

The French Government are behaving very foolishly, flinging themselves into the arms of the Jesuits; making processions through the streets of twelve hundred priests, with the King and Royal Family at their head; disgusting the people, and laying the foundation of another revolution, which seems to me (if this man* lives) to be inevitable. God bless you!

S. S.

247.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, April 28th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

Yesterday was a miserable day; it rained in torrents from morning to night. I employed the morning in visiting in a hackney-coach. It is curious to see in what little apartments a French *savant* lives; you find him at his books, covered with snuff, with a little dog that bites your legs.

I had no invitation to dinner, so dined by myself at a coffee-house. I improve in my knowledge of Paris cookery. There were four English ladies dining in the public coffee-house,—very well-bred women. In the evening I received an invitation from Mrs. H. S—— to go with her and her son to the Opera. I went, and was pleased with the gaiety of the house;

* Charles X.

there is no ballet, and at present no good singer. The house was full of English, who talk loud, and seem to care little for other people; this is their characteristic, and a very brutal and barbarous distinction it is. After the Opera, I went to drink tea with Mrs. S——, and so ended my day.

This morning it is snowing. I am going to breakfast with the Duke de Broglie. God bless you all!

S. S.

248.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, April 29th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

Horrible weather again today; snowing and raining all day. I went to breakfast with the Duke de Broglie. They are virtuous, sensible people, but give breakfasts without a table-cloth!

I saw the Palace of the Luxembourg and the House of Peers; bad pictures, fine gardens, and the noblest staircase in Paris. The Luxembourg gardens are very fine for the French style of gardening, which I confess I like very much. I am going tomorrow with Mr. Sneyd to see St. Cloud perfectly and Meudon. A fortnight is sufficient for any man to see Paris, if he meets with no friends and is diligent.

S. S.

249.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, May 1st, 1826.

Saturday was again a horrible day. I have been

badly advised about the time of year: the month of May is the time. *We will set off from Yorkshire the 1st of May.*

I dined with Talleyrand; his cook is said to be the best in Paris. The Duke of Bedford took me there. He was very civil (Talleyrand, I mean), as was his niece, the Duchess de Dino. I sat near Mr. Montron, the Luttrell of Paris,—a very witty, agreeable man, with whom I made great friends. In the afternoon I went to Lady Grantham's, where was a splendid assembly. I amused myself very much, and stayed till twelve o'clock. I renewed my acquaintance with Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Ambassador; a very sensible, agreeable man.

S. S.

250.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

Paris, May 4th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I was engaged all yesterday in seeing the procession. The King laid the first stone of a statue to Louis XVI. in the Place de Louis XV. The procession passed under my window, where were Miss Fox, Miss Vernon, Lady Holland, and others. There were about twelve hundred priests, four cardinals, a piece of the real Cross, and one of the nails, carried under a canopy upon a velvet cushion; the King, the Marshals, the House of Peers, and the House of Commons following. A more absurd, disgraceful, and ridiculous, or a finer, sight, I never saw. The Bourbons are too foolish and too absurd; nothing can keep them on the throne.

The season is very cold; it is a decided east wind today. I am fully a month too soon; the foliage is not half out.

You know Mrs. H. S——. On Sunday, when I preached, she sat near Sir Sidney Smith; he commended the sermon very much. "Yes," said Mrs. S——, "I think it should make you proud of your name!" You may easily guess how this was relished.

I am a good deal alarmed by these riots in England, because I do not know how they are to end. There is a want of work; when will the demand for manufacturing labour revive? How is it possible to support such a population in idleness?

The King is grown dreadfully old since I dined with him at the Duke of Buccleuch's, in Scotland; I should not have known him again. There are some hopes of the Dauphin and of the Duchess d'Angoulême. If some change does not soon take place, there will be a revolution. God bless you all!

S. S.

251.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

May 5th, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I went yesterday to the Cimetière du Père la Chaise. This is a large burying-ground of two hundred acres, out of Paris. The tombs are placed in little gardens by the relations, and covered with flowers. You see people mourning and weeping over the graves of their friends. I was much pleased and affected with it.

From thence I went to the Castle of Vincennes, two or three miles from Paris. It was here that the Duke

d'Enghien was shot by order of Buonaparte. A monument, in very bad taste, is erected to his memory in the chapel. The castle is not inhabited, but by artillerymen; it is a sort of bad Woolwich. The park is immense; at first they would not let me in, but a sergeant of artillery, who was showing it to his friends, admitted me to be of the party. It is not however worth seeing,—only worth driving round.

I went to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Greathed. They gave me a very good dinner, particularly a *filet de bœuf piqué* of admirable flavour and contrivance. There was a gentleman, whose name I could not learn, nor ascertain his nature; and a very agreeable, clever woman, by the name of Quesnel, the widow of Holcroft, who writes for the stage, here; she has six children by her first, and six by her second husband, and she says she is called at her hotel *la dame aux enfans!* God bless you all!

S. S.

252.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

May 7th, 1826.

I passed three hours yesterday at the Police, getting my passport. I think I have nearly seen all my sights. I have seen Sismondi and Madame Sismondi this morning; he is an energetic and sensible old man. My two reviews are very much read, and praised here for their fun; I read them the other night, and they made me laugh a good deal.

The Parisians are very fond of adorning their public fountains: sometimes water pours forth from a rock, sometimes trickles from the jaws of a serpent. The

dull and prosaic English turn a brass cock, or pull out a plug! What a nation!

I have bought the 'Cuisinier Bourgeois.' I think we may attempt one or two dishes. We shall not be perfect at first, but such an object will ensure and justify perseverance. I meant, when first I came, to have bought all Paris; but, finding that difficult, I have, for myself, only spent six shillings!

S. S.

253.] To Mrs. Sydney Smith.

London, Friday.

Dearest Kate,

I set off at nine o'clock on Tuesday in the diligence, with a French lady and her father, who has an estate near Calais. I found him a sensible man, with that propensity which the French have for explaining things which do not require explanation. He explained to me, for instance, what he did when he found coffee too strong; he put water in it! He explained how blind people found their way in Paris,—by tapping upon the wall with a stick; what he principally endeavoured to make clear to me was, how they knew when they were come to a crossing;—it was when there was no longer a wall to strike against with their stick! I expressed my thorough comprehension of these means used by blind men, and he paid me many compliments upon my quickness. I had fine weather for my journey, and arrived at Calais at four o'clock on Wednesday. I went to Quilliac's Hotel, which I found less good and less dear than that of Dessein.

I went to the play the day before I came away, and

saw Talma. He is certainly a very fine actor, making due allowance for the vehemence and gesticulation of the French.

What has struck me most is the extraordinary beauty of the French papers. I have bought enough to paper your room for £2. 10*s.*; the duty upon it was £5; total, £7. 10*s.*, about as cheap as English paper at a shilling a yard; but I see no such patterns in England.

We sailed at about eleven o'clock, and had a beautiful passage of less than three hours. A sea-voyage produces a little terror, some surprise, great admiration, much cold, much *ennui*, and, where there is no sickness, much hunger. I got my things through the Custom-house here before six o'clock, and travelled all night to London, with a Flemish baron, his lady, and child, and a French physician's wife. I am very little fatigued. And so ends my journey to France, which has given me much pleasure and amusement. God bless you all!

S. S.

254.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

Foston, July, 1826.

Dear Jeffrey,

Will you allow me to remind you that it is above three weeks since I asked you whether I might write an article upon licensing ale-houses,—a great English subject? I should take it as a favour if you would answer these queries as soon as you can, by a single word, as follows:—

Ale-houses—Yes.
Ale-houses—No.

The impediment to the under workmen is serious, when the master will not tell them what they are to do. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

255.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

August 8th, 1826.

* * * * *

It struck me last night, as I was lying in bed, that Mackintosh, if he were to write on pepper, would thus describe it:—

"Pepper may philosophically be described as a dusty and highly-pulverized seed of an oriental fruit; an article rather of condiment than diet, which, dispersed lightly over the surface of food with no other rule than the caprice of the consumer, communicates pleasure, rather than affords nutrition; and, by adding a tropical flavour to the gross and succulent viands of the North, approximates the different regions of the earth, explains the objects of commerce, and justifies the industry of man."

I am very glad to hear from Miss Vernon, that you are all so well, and that you are enjoying yourselves so much at Ampthill.

S. S.

256.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, September, 1826.

My dear Lady Grey,

We have had Mr. Whishaw and Mr. Jeffrey here, and a number of very sensible, agreeable men, coming up to the imperfect idea I am able to form of good

society. You have had a brisk time of it at Howick, and all the organs of combativeness have been called into action. I hope you are cooling. We have been, ever since I have been here, in the horror of elections—each party acting and thinking as if the salvation of several planets depended upon the adoption of Mr. Johnson and the rejection of Mr. Jackson.

I think it is the hot weather which has agreed with you; it is quite certain that it has not agreed with me. I never suffered so much from any species of weather; but I am, you know, of the family of Falstaff.

Pray make all my friends (meaning by that expression your daughters) study languages on the Hamiltonian method.

I hope you found Howick in high beauty. It must have been an affecting meeting. You left it under the conviction that you should see it no more, though I told you all the time you would live to be eighty.

Pray read Agar Ellice's 'Iron Mask;' not so much for that question, though it is not devoid of curiosity, as to remark the horrible atrocities perpetrated under absolute monarchies; and to justify and extol Lord Grey, and, at the humblest distance, Sydney Smith and other men, who, according to their station in life and the different talents given them, have defended liberty.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

From your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

257.]' To Lady Holland.

London, Thursday, 1826.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have written to Maltby, and stated (in order to accumulate motives) that you are a considerable scholar, but shy, and must be pressed a good deal before you develope such-like knowledge; particularly, that you have peculiar opinions about the preterpluperfect tense; and this, I know, will bring him directly, for that tense has always occasioned him much uneasiness, though he has appeared to the world cheerful and serene.

But how little we know of what passes in each other's minds! Ever yours,

S. S.

258.] To John Allen, Esq.

Foston, Nov. 9th, 1826.

Dear Allen,

Pray tell me something about Lord and Lady Holland, as it is several centuries since I have seen them. I was in the same house in Cheshire with ——, but he was too ill to see me; extreme depression of spirits seems to be his complaint, an evil of which I have a full comprehension; Mrs. —— seems to be really alarmed about him. Have you finished your squabbles with Lingard? The Catholics are outrageous with you, and I have heard some of the most violent express a doubt whether you are quite an orthodox member of the Church of England.

I never saw Lord Carlisle looking so well. Is not happiness good for the gout? I think that remedy

is at work upon him. I cannot say how agreeable their neighbourhood is to me. I am very glad to see Mackintosh is really at work upon his history: it will immortalize him, and make Ampthill classical from recollections.

I think of going to Edinburgh in the spring with my family, on a visit to Jeffrey, who was with us in the summer. Health and respect, dear Allen! Prosperity to the Church, and power to the clergy!

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

We have seen a good deal of old Whishaw this summer; he is as pleasant as he is wise and honest. He has character enough to make him well received if he were dull, and wit enough to make him popular if he were a rogue.

259.] To EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

December 26*th*, 1826.

Dear Davenport,

I wish you would turn your talents and activity to oppose this odious war. There is no such thing as a "just war," or, at least, as a *wise* war; at all events, this is not one. Pray be pacific. I see you have broken the ice in the House of Commons. I shall be curious to hear your account of your feelings, of what colour the human creatures looked who surrounded you, and how the candles and Speaker appeared. We *must* have a small massacre of magistrates; nothing else will do. The gentleman you have mentioned shall be among the first.

I wish you had added a word of the nature and condition of my old friend Mrs. H——: breeding, of course; at least, the *onus probandi* is with her.

We hear nothing here but of distress, bazaars, and the high price of hay. I am not without alarm as to the state of the country: the manufacturing distress has lasted too long.

For God's sake, open upon the Chancery. On this subject there can be no excess of vituperation and severity. Advocate also free trade in ale and ale-houses. Respect the Church, and believe that the insignificant member of it who now addresses you is most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

260.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Howick, February, 1827.

My dear Jeffrey,

It appears there is a great probability of war with Spain, and therefore with France. If the majority had been in favour of the Catholics, Peel and Lord Bathurst had settled to resign. Of this there is no doubt. Lord Liverpool regains neither speech nor reason, only a little power of locomotion; his resignation has been given in by his friends. The King has taken the most decided part against the Catholics, and begs he may never more be importuned respecting a question which harasses his conscience; he pleads even his Coronation Oath!

There is a great effort made by the High Tories to fling Canning overboard, but Peel is averse to try the experiment. But for this, it is supposed he would be

dismissed. The alternative, I take to be, either Peel, or Canning, bound hand, foot, and tongue. Lord Wellington openly declares Canning to be, from his indiscretion, unfit for office.

I have not heard the slightest rumours of Lord Grey or Lord Lansdowne.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

261.] To MRS. FLETCHER.

York, March, 1827.

My dear Madam,

Many thanks for your obliging note, and for the loan of the books. I really must persevere in my judgment of Tone's conduct. His life had been spared by the Irish Government, who are generous enough to let him off with no other condition than that of expatriation; and the moment their generosity has set him free, he plots their destruction by calling in a foreign enemy. I *must* hold this to be bad morals. A tone of vulgarity pervades the whole narrative; yet, if the first error in morals be overlooked, there is devotion, heroism, courage, and perseverance in his conduct.

My sermons were little or nothing; their excellence is in your own desire to excel, and in your disposition to be pleased.

Politics, domestic and foreign, are very discouraging; Jesuits abroad—Turks in Greece—No-Poperists in England! A. panting to burn B.; B. fuming to roast C.; C. miserable that he cannot reduce D. to

ashes; and D. consigning to eternal perdition the three first letters of the alphabet.

Health and respect!

SYDNEY SMITH.

262.] TO THE EARL GREY.

March 24th, 1827.

My dear Lord,

* * * * *

It would have some effect, if the Catholics were to admit the expediency of excluding every member from voting on the affairs of the Church, who would not take the declaration against Transubstantiation. The common query is, Are they to assist in regulating the affairs of *our* Church, who will not permit us to meddle with *their* Church?

I remain, my dear Lord, with our kind regards, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

263.] *To the Translator of Voltaire's 'Charles XII.'*

Foston, York, April 24th, 1827.

Madam,*

I am extremely obliged by the honour you have done me in sending me your translation of 'Charles

* About the time at which this letter was written, public attention had been drawn to the so-called Hamiltonian System of interlinear translation, by an article in the Edinburgh Review. The book here referred to was translated anonymously by the Editor of these Letters; and as this toilsome work was undertaken partly in consequence of the eulogy of the system contained in that article, a copy was sent to the author of it. It was not till long afterwards that he knew to whom his letter was addressed.—ED.

XII.' I have no reason to alter my opinion expressed in the Edinburgh Review; all you have written confirms to me the benefit of the double translation. Anything that can be done to alleviate the wretchedness of learning languages, is of the highest public importance. I will look over your translation; and, if anything occurs to me deserving of your consideration, will write to you through the medium of your publishers. I remain, Madam, your well-wisher and obedient servant,

SYDNEY SMITH.

264.] TO THE DEAN OF CHESTER.

Foston, June 28th, 1827.

My dear Sir,

I can only say, that if any man asked me whether I was the author of an anonymous publication, *in which his character was attacked*, that I would immediately (if I *were* the author) own myself to be so, and publish his defence with my own assent to, or dissent from it, accompanied by my reasons; and, if I thought I had done wrong, I would apologize. This is the plain course; and this course I dare say —— (if he be the author) will pursue. I shall have occasion to write to him and Jeffrey soon, and will state to them the same opinions I have stated to you.

As to the old quarrel with the Edinburgh Review, and who was right and who was wrong, you will, I am sure, have the goodness to excuse me for not saying anything on the subject; twenty years have elapsed, and the thing is dead and gone. You and I, like wise

and respectable men, have shaken hands, and so ends the matter.

I have not read your sermon. I received a letter from London about the time it was published, taking a view of it as a decided anti-Catholic sermon, and desiring me to review it. I immediately declined doing so; and, as I had the wisdom to keep out of the original war, I have a fair right to remain neutral in the secondary dispute, and must therefore deny myself the pleasure I should derive from any production of yours.

You have done quite right in writing to me. You may depend upon it I will exhort —— (if he be the author) to reconsider his remarks, and to do you all the justice he conscientiously can. I have written nothing whatever in the approaching number of the Edinburgh Review.

Upon looking over your letter again carefully, I perceive you do not contend that your sermon, to a certain extent, is not anti-Catholic, but that you have always been anti-Catholic to the same extent; if so, this is, of course, a perfect answer to the charge of inconsistency. I have unfortunately seen so little of you for many years past, that I can have no knowledge of your opinions; but I had formed a loose notion that you had been a decided friend to Catholic emancipation, and it certainly would have surprised me (as it seems to have surprised ——) to have read from you a sermon so anti-Catholic as you represent yours to be. I thought I had heard that you were almost alone in the Convocation in defending the Catholics. But these are mere rumours of the streets; I have no kind of authority for them.

I write in haste; pray construe my letter in the

spirit of kindness and goodwill, or if you doubt me, or whether you doubt me or not, come to Foston and try me. Yours, dear Sir, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

265.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

July, 1827.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

The worst political news is, that Canning is not well, and that the Duke of Wellington has dined with the King. Canning dead, Peel is the only man remaining alive in the House of Commons;—I mean, the only man in his senses.

The article on the new Ministry is by ——; violent, but there is considerable power in it.

I hope to be able to make good my excursion in the autumn, but it is doubtful; we have some thoughts of going to Scarborough. It seems to me as if you wanted sea air and bathing. Persuade Mr. Meynell of this. He is a very affectionate husband; and if you look ill and don't eat, he will immediately consent: so come to Scarborough, dear G.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

266.] To MESSRS. ——, BOOKSELLERS, ——.

Foston, July 30th, 1827.

Gentlemen,

I have received from you within these few months some very polite and liberal presents of new publica-

tions; and, though I was sorry you put yourselves to any expense on my account, yet I was flattered by this mark of respect and goodwill from gentlemen to whom I am personally unknown.

I am quite sure however that you overlooked the purpose and tendency of a work called ———, or that you would not have sent it to a clergyman of the Established Church, or indeed to a clergyman of *any* church. I see also advertised at your house a translation of Voltaire's 'Philosophical Dictionary.' I hope you will have the goodness to excuse me, and not to attribute what I say to an impertinent, but a friendly, disposition. Let us pass over, for a moment, all those *much* higher considerations, and look at this point only in a worldly view, as connected with *your* interests. Is it wise to give to your house the character of publishers of infidel books? The English people are a very religious people, and those who are not, hate the active dissemination of irreligion. The zealots of irreligion are few and insignificant, and confined principally to London. You have not a chance of eminence or success in that line; and I advise you prudently and quietly to back out of it.

I hate the insolence, persecution, and intolerance which so often pass under the name of religion, and (as you know) I have fought against them; but I have an unaffected horror of irreligion and impiety; and every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel.

I write this from respect to you. It is quite a private communication, and I am sure you are too wise and too enlightened to take it in evil part.

I was very much pleased with the 'Two Months in

Ireland,' but did not read the poetical part; the prosaic division of the work is very good.

I remain, Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

SYDNEY SMITH.

267.] To LADY HOLLAND.

November 6th, 1827.

Dear Lady Holland,

I was very sorry to hear from Mrs. Robert Smith that you were indisposed at Cheam. These three—November, December, and January—are the unhappy months. I do not expect a moment's happiness before the 1st of February. Cheam was built (as it is now ascertained) by Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites. I think it is one of the worst and most incurable places I ever saw, but if it amuses poor Bobus, it was not created in vain.

You know these matters better than I: but my conjecture is that Lord Grey will go into regular opposition, or at least very soon slide into it. Whatever his intentions may be at the beginning, nobody heats so soon upon the road.

Jeffrey has been here with his adjectives, who always travel with him. His throat is giving way; so much wine goes down it, so many million words leap over it, how can it rest? Pray make him a judge; he is a truly great man, and is very heedless of his own interests. I lectured him on his romantic folly of wishing his friends to be preferred before himself, and succeeded, I think, in making him a little more selfish.

I have never ceased talking of the beauty of Ampt-

hill, and in those unmeasured terms of which Mary accuses me. I am afraid I *do* deal a little sometimes in superlatives, but it is only when I am provoked by the coldness of my fellow-creatures. You see my younger brother, Courtenay, is turned out of office in India, for refusing the surety of the East India Company! Truly the Smiths are a stiff-necked generation, and yet they have all got rich but I. Courtenay, they say, has £150,000, and he keeps only a cat! In the last letter I had from him, which was in 1802, he confessed that his money was gathering very fast.

S. S.

[268.]

[This diverting letter requires some explanation, which Mr. Howard, of Corby, has been kind enough to furnish. I give it in his own words.—Ed.]

"The following letter is not dated, but the frank of Lord Morpeth, 'Malton, November 22, 1827,' supplies the omission; it was addressed to me shortly after we had met Mr. Sydney Smith and Sir James Mackintosh at Brougham Hall. The disquisition which gave rise to it was a sequel of some conversation on the subject. It was entitled:—

"'*Account of some of the Roman Legions and Cohorts stationed on and near the Roman Wall, with a Geographical Reference to the Places from whence they came.*

"'PREFATORY REMARKS.

"'The policy of the Romans, who governed one

conquered nation by the powers of another, and made use of the turbulent and refractory subjects of one part of their empire to keep the others in subjection, was very fully evinced by the garrisons on the Roman Wall (which was the northern extremity of their possessions) being composed of troops from all nations, even the most southern extremity of their dominions.

"'Thus we see Numidian Moors, and troops from the most distant southern regions, brought to shiver in the bleakest parts of Cumberland and Northumberland.'

"N.B. An enumeration of the different Numidian, Hungarian, Thracian, and other legions, found by records to have been stationed at the forts along the Roman Wall, was given in proof of the foregoing remarks; to which Mr. Sydney Smith sent the subjoined reply."

To Philip Howard, Esq., Corby Castle.

Foston, Saturday.

My dear Sir,

My opposition to the Numidian Colony is, I assure you, not lurking, but salient and luminous, and founded upon a research, I must say, rather wider than your own. In the first place, I object to your geographical description of Mauritania, and rather suspect you have followed the geographers of the school of Ptolemy,—at least, so I should suspect, from your erroneous notions of the confines of Mauritania. Upon this subject let me beg you to consult the learned Barkius 'De Rebus Mauritaniensibus,' fol. Bat. 1672; Pluker's 'Africa,' cap. 2, sec. 3; the 'Mauritania' of Viger, Paris, 1679, quarto; and the 'Africa Vulgata' of Scoppius.

Baden, the famous Dutch scholar, fell into the same error with yourself, but was properly chastised in the 'Badius Flagellatus,' now become a very scarce book, but which you may certainly borrow from Mr. Archdeacon Wrangham.

Are you acquainted with the dissertation of Professor la Manche, than which, Gibbon says, "nothing more copious and satisfactory ever issued from the French press"? The perusal of these works will, I think, give you new ideas upon the eastern division of the Syrtis. Abalaba can have nothing possibly to do with the Africans. —— has shown this word to come from *Abal,* the lord of the British chiefs. Blakarus, or Barkarus, cannot be African words; for Tonnericus 'De Rebus Africanis,' and Crakius 'De Linguis Occidentalibus,' have shown, in all the languages of that coast, the total absence of the vowels *a* and *u,* and have even produced great and reasonable doubts of *e, i,* and *o.* The Emperor Gordian could not have been crowned at Tidrus. Nobody could imagine *that,* who for an instant had inspected and studied the late discoveries brought to light in the Phelian marbles. The province of Byzacum proper does not lie to the south of Tunis; you are mistaking it for *F*yzacum. The first signifies, in the ancient Coptic, *head of fire,* whereas Fyzacum signifies *red with wheat.*

I could go on for an hour, pointing out the mistakes into which a spirit of hypothesis has plunged your excellent understanding. I end with seriously advising you to read Galt and Porringer;* and, if you

* 'Galt de Colon. Roman.,' Venet. 1672; and Porringer's celebrated treatise of 'Mare nec liberum nec clausum;' the London, not the Scotch edition.

are not then cured of this kind of theory, I must pronounce you, my dear Mr. Howard, to be incurable.

Ever yours very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

269.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Edinburgh, 1827.

My dear Lady Grey,

You are so kind, that I am sure you will be glad to hear that Mrs. Sydney bore the rest of her journey well, though she is not yet off the sofa.

Dr. Thompson advises as follows for you :—

Broiled meat at breakfast, an egg, and chocolate.
At twelve, a basin of rich soup.
At two, a meat luncheon and a tumbler of porter.
A jelly at four.
Dinner at six; four or five glasses of claret.
Tea and a whole muffin.
Hot supper and negus at ten.
Something nourishing at the side of your bed.

I have been today to an exhibition of Scotch portraits. High cheek-bones are not favourable to the fine arts.

I found it dreadfully cold from Alnwick to Edinburgh. My companions were a captain of a man-of-war and a sherry merchant from Cadiz. My vendor of sherry told me that all the accounts of Ferdinand's sending regiments were most absurd; that he could no more send men than send angels; that he was *not* devout; that, in fact, the Spanish nation did not exist; that the French and the monks in the south of Spain

were most unpopular; that the people at large ardently desired a Constitution; and that he had sherry at all prices from £27 to £57 per butt.

And so, dear Lady Grey, God bless you! Read cheerful books, play at cards, look forward two hours, and believe me always most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

270.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Jan. 4th, 1828.

We were married on New Year's Day,* and are *gone!* I feel as if I had lost a limb, and were walking about with one leg,—and nobody pities this description of invalids. How many amputations you have suffered! Ere long, I do not think you will have a leg to stand on.

Kind regards to my Lord and my friends your daughters; as many years to you all as you wish for yourselves.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

271.] FROM LADY LYNDHURST.

George-street, Jan. 24th, 1828.

My dear Mr. Smith,

My husband has just informed me that he has nominated you to a vacant stall at Bristol; and he was willing that I should have the pleasure of first communicating to you this good news. I need not say

* Marriage of his youngest daughter to N. Hibbert, Esq.

how *much* it has delighted me. Pray have the goodness to write and inform me how you and Mrs. Sydney are, and where your new-married daughter is. Best regards to all you love. Ever yours,

S. G. LYNDHURST.

272.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Bristol, Feb. 17*th*, 1828.

My dear Lady Holland,

An extremely comfortable Prebendal house; seven-stall stables and room for four carriages, so that I can hold all your *cortége* when you come; looks to the south, and is perfectly snug and parsonic; masts of West-Indiamen seen from the windows. The colleagues I have found here are a Mr. Ridley, cousin to Sir Matthew; a very good-natured, agreeable man;—deaf, tottering, worldly-minded, vain as a lawyer, noisy, and perfectly good-natured and obliging. The little Dean I have not seen; he is as small as the Bishop, they say. It is supposed that the one of these ecclesiastics elevated upon the shoulders of the other, would fall short of the Archbishop of Canterbury's wig. The Archbishop of York is forced to go down on his knees to converse with the Bishop of Bristol, just as an elephant kneels to receive its rider.

I have lived in perfect solitude ever since I have been here, but am perfectly happy. The novelty of this place amuses me.

It seems to me that Lord Wellington has made a great mistake in not putting a perfectly independent man, or an apparently independent man, over the

army. The cry against a military governor will now be very loud.

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

273.] To LORD HOLLAND.

Foston, July, 1828.

My dear Lord Holland,

I hear with great concern of your protracted illness. I would bear the pain for you for a fortnight if I were allowed to roar, for I cannot bear pain in silence and dignity.

I have suffered no damage in corn nor hay. Several Dissenters have suffered in our neighbourhood. Pecchio's marriage goes on well. The lawyers are busy on the settlements. I cannot say how happy it makes me to see in port a man so clever, so honourable, and so unfortunate. I go to Bristol the middle of September, calling in my way on the two Lyttletons, Abercrombie, Meynell, and (but do not tell Whishaw) Lord Bathurst.

I am reading Walter Scott's 'Napoleon,' which I do with the greatest pleasure. I am as much surprised at it, as at any of his works. So current, so sensible, animated, well-arranged: so agreeable to take up, so difficult to put down, and, for him, so candid! There are of course many mistakes, but that has nothing to do with the general complexion of the work.

I see the Duke of Bedford takes the chair for the Amelioration of the Jews. It would make me laugh to see that excellent Duke in the midst of the Ten Tribes, and I think he would laugh also. But what

will become of our trade of contending against religious persecution? Everybody will be emancipated before we die! I say *our* trade, for I have learnt it from you, and been your humble imitator.

God bless you, dear Lord Holland! There is nobody in the world has a greater affection for you than I have, or who hears with greater pain of your illness and confinement.

S. S.

274.] To Henry Howard, Esq.

Bristol, Aug. 28, 1828.

My dear Sir,

You will be amused by hearing that I am to preach the 5th of November sermon at Bristol, and to dine at the 5th of November dinner with the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol. All sorts of bad theology are preached at the Cathedral on that day, and all sorts of bad toasts drunk at the Mansion House. I will do neither the one nor the other, nor bow the knee in the house of Rimmon.

It would, I am sure, give Mrs. Sydney and myself great pleasure to pay you a visit in Cumberland, and one day or another it shall be done; but remember, the difference is, you pass near us in coming to London, and it must be by malice prepense if we come to you. I hope you have seen the Carlisles, because I wish you all sorts of happiness, and know none greater than the society of such enlightened, amiable, and dignified people. When does Philip come to see me? does he fear being converted to the Protestant faith? Brougham thinks the Catholic question as good as carried; but I never think myself as good as carried,

till my horse brings me to my stable-door! Still Dawson's conversion is portentous. Lady —— in former times insisted upon Lady Bessborough having a tooth out before she herself would venture:—probably Peel has made Dawson become a proselyte before him, in the same spirit. What am I to do with my time, or you with yours, after the Catholic question is carried?

Fine weather,—or, to speak more truly, dreadful heat;—both hay and corn without a drop of rain; while many Dissenters in the neighbourhood have lost their crops. I have read Knight's pamphlet: pretty good, though I think, if I had seen as much, I could could have told my story better;—but I am a conceited fellow. Still, whatever are my faults, I am, dear Mr. Howard, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

275.] To LORD HOLLAND.

Bristol, Nov. 5th, 1828.

My dear Lord Holland,

Today I have preached an honest sermon (5th of November), before the Mayor and Corporation, in the Cathedral;—the most Protestant Corporation in England! They stared at me with all their eyes. Several of them could not keep the turtle on their stomachs. I know your taste for sermons is languid, but I must extract one passage for Lord Holland, to show that I am still as honest a man as when he first thought me a proper object for his patronage.

"I hope, in the condemnation of the Catholic religion, in which I sincerely join their worst enemies, I

shall not be so far mistaken as to have it supposed that I would convey the slightest approbation of any laws which disqualify and incapacitate any class of men for civil offices, on account of religious opinions. I consider all such laws as fatal and lamentable mistakes in legislation: they are the mistakes of troubled times and half-barbarous ages. All Europe is gradually emerging from their influence. This country has lately made a noble and successful effort for their abolition. In proportion as this example is followed, I firmly believe the enemies of the Church and State will be lessened, and the foundation of peace, order, and happiness will receive additional strength.

"I cannot discuss the uses and abuses of this day; but I should be beyond measure concerned if a condemnation of theological errors were construed into an approbation of laws so deeply marked by the spirit of intolerance."

I have been reading the 'Duke of Rovigo.' A fool, a villain, and as dull as it is possible for any book to be about Buonaparte. Lord Bathurst's place is ugly; his family and himself always agreeable. Believe me always very affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

276.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

November 28th, 1828.

My dear Murray,

Noble weather! I received some grouse in the summer, and upon the direction was marked W. M. This I construed to be William Murray, and wrote to thank him. This he must have taken as a foolish quiz,

or as a petition for game. Pray explain and put this right.

The Kent Meeting has, I think, failed as an example. This, and the three foolish noblemen's letters, will do good. The failure of the Kent precedent I consider as of the utmost importance. The Duke keeps his secret. I certainly believe he meditates some improvement. I rather like his foreign politics, in opposition to the belligerent Quixotism of Canning. He has the strongest disposition to keep this country in profound peace, to let other nations scramble for freedom as they can, without making ourselves the liberty-mongers of all Europe; a very seductive trade, but too ruinous and expensive.

How is Jeffrey's throat?—

> That throat, so vex'd by cackle and by cup,
> Where wine descends, and endless words come up.
> Much injured organ! Constant is thy toil;
> Spits turn to do thee harm, and coppers boil:
> Passion and punch, and toasted cheese and paste,
> And all that's said and swallow'd, lay thee waste!

I have given notice to my tenant here, and mean to pass the winters at Bristol. I hope, as soon as you can afford it, you will give up the law. Why bore yourself with any profession, if you are rich enough to do without it? Ever yours, dear Murray,

SYDNEY SMITH.

277.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

December, 1828.

My dear Lady Holland,

Many thanks for your kind anxiety respecting my health. I not only was never better, but never half

so well: indeed I find I have been very ill all my life, without knowing it. Let me state some of the goods arising from abstaining from all fermented liquors. First, sweet sleep; having never known what sweet sleep was, I sleep like a baby or a ploughboy. If I wake, no needless terrors, no black visions of life, but pleasing hopes and pleasing recollections: Holland House, past and to come! If I dream, it is not of lions and tigers, but of Easter dues and tithes. Secondly, I can take longer walks, and make greater exertions, without fatigue. My understanding is improved, and I comprehend Political Economy. I see better without wine and spectacles than when I used both. Only one evil ensues from it: I am in such extravagant spirits that I must lose blood, or look out for some one who will bore and depress me. Pray leave off wine:—the stomach quite at rest; no heartburn, no pain, no distension.

Bobus is more like a wrestler in the Olympic games than a victim of gout. I am glad —— is become so bold. How often have I conjured him to study indiscretion, and to do the rashest things that he could possibly imagine! With what sermons, and with what earnest regard, I have warned him against prudence and moderation! I begin to think I have not laboured in vain.

I disappear from the civilized world on Friday.

S. S.

278.] To Francis Jeffrey, Esq.

No date: about 1828 *or* 1829.

My dear Jeffrey,

I trust you and I hang together by other ties than

those of Master Critic and Journeyman ditto. At the same time, since I left your employment, you have not written a syllable to me.* I hope you will do so, for among all your friends you have none who have a more sincere regard or a higher admiration for you; and it would be wicked not to show these epistolary remembrances of each other.

I should be glad to know your opinion of the Corn Bill. I am an advocate for the principle, but would restrict the protection price to nine shillings instead of ten. The latter price is a protection to rents—not to agriculture. I confess I have not nerve enough for the stupendous revolution that the plan of growing our bread in France would produce. I should think it rash, and it certainly is unjust; because we are compelled to grow our lace, silk-goods, scissors, and ten thousand other things in England, by prohibitory duties on the similar productions of other countries. These views are probably weak, and I hold them by a slender thread, only till taught better; but I hold them.†

There is a great Peer in our neighbourhood, who gives me the run of his library while he is in town; and I am fetching up my arrears in books, which everybody (who reads at all) has read; among others, I stumbled upon the 'Life of Kotzebue,' or rather his year of exile, and read it with the greatest interest. It is a rapid succession of very striking events, told

* Mr. Sydney Smith ceased to write in the Edinburgh Review when he became a dignitary of the Church, towards the end of the year 1827.

† Mr. Sydney Smith held them not long. He became an advocate, and a very earnest one, for Free Trade.—*Note by Mrs. Sydney Smith.*

with great force and simplicity. His display of sentiment seems natural to the man, foolish as it sometimes is. 'With Madame de Staal's Memoirs, so strongly praised by the excellent Baron Grimm, I was a good deal disappointed: she has nothing to tell, and does not tell it very well. She is neither important, nor admirable for talents or virtues. I see your name mentioned among the writers in 'Constable's Encyclopædia;' pray tell me what articles you have written: I shall always read anything which you write. Is the work carried on well? The travels of the Gallo-American gentleman alluded to by Constable, are, I suppose, those of M. Simond. He is a very sensible man, and I should be curious to see the light in which this country appeared to him. I should think he would be too severe.

We are all perfectly well. I am busy at my little farm and cottage, which you gave me reason to believe Mrs. Jeffrey and yourself would visit. Pray remember me to Murray, and believe me ever, my dear Jeffrey, now, and years hence, when you are a judge, and the Review is gone to the dogs, your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

279.] To — BEDFORD, ESQ.—(Bristol.)

Foston, Jan. 13th, 1829.

Dear Sir,

I always intended to explain to you why I declined to be Steward to the dinner given for the Charity of the Sons of the Clergy, but it went out of my head while I was at Bristol.

I object to the whole plan of the thing. It appears

to me quite ridiculous to desire two men to pay for a charity dinner, where actually, in many instances, less is collected during the dinner than the dinner costs. Men who mean to patronize a charity should dine at their own costs; the use of Stewards would then be, to guarantee the innkeeper that he should not be a loser by providing dinner for a certain number of persons.

If two gentlemen were to give such a guarantee to the extent of £15 or £20 each, this would be a fair tax upon their time, trouble, and pocket; but to ask any man to give a dinner for charitable purposes, where the guests *coming* for charitable purposes do not give the value of what they eat and drink, is an abuse which I never will countenance. It is in vain to say money is sent *after* dinner; so it would be if all paid *for* their dinner. If ever this alteration be made, and I am wanted as Steward, I will serve, or be at the expense of serving; but not till I have seen the amended plan.

I write this to you, not as Secretary to the Society, but as a neighbour and an acquaintance; because, though I have a right to say to the Society, yes or no, I have no right to criticize their institutions, or to propose to them any change in their plans. My *motive* for taking the part I have done, is, not only that I have no money to fling away upon institutions so faulty in their construction (however excellent their principle), but because I believe I am expressing the opinion of many persons who are too timid to express it themselves, and who would feel the expense as a great and unprofitable burden. I remain, dear Sir, with sincere good wishes, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

280.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, July 13th, 1829.

My dear Lady Grey,

I should be very glad to hear that Lord Howick is recovered, and that you passed through your London campaign, if not with glory, at least without defeat and doctor's bills. I am extremely pleased with Combe Florey, and pronounce it to be a very pretty place in a very beautiful country. The house I shall make decently convenient. I have sixty acres of good land round it. The habit of the country is to give dinners and not to sleep out, so this I shall avoid. I am reading Hall's book, but will read it through before I say a word about it, for I find my opinion changes so much between the first and third volume of a book.

I was glad to see my Lord presiding at the democratical College: he would do it in the very best manner the thing could be done.

My spirits are very much improved, but I have now and then sharp pangs of grief.* I did not know I had cared so much for anybody; but the habit of providing for human beings, and watching over them for so many years, generates a fund of affection, of the magnitude of which I was not aware.

Though living in a very improved climate, we have had fires in every room in the house. It is a bad and an unhappy year! It grieves me to think, when you go to the North, that I shall be five hundred miles from Howick. It is now near thirty years since I made acquaintance, and then friends, with its inhabi-

* Mr. Sydney Smith's eldest son, Douglas, died in the previous April, at the age of twenty-four.

tants. You must all come and see this Valley of Flowers when you visit Lady Elizabeth in the West. It is a most parsonic parsonage, like those described in novels.

I cannot congratulate you, dear Lady Grey, upon the marriage of your daughter. Happen it must; but it is a dreadful calamity when it does happen.

You must read Basil Hall's Travels, at all events; that is inevitable. It is not a book which will (to use Lord Dudley's phrase) blow over.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Write me a line when you have any time to spare, to tell me of the welfare of all your family. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

281.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Combe Florey, August, 1829.

Health and respect, dear Lady Morley!

I am quite delighted with the West of England.

* * * * * *

God send peace to the Empire, and particularly to the Church; and may mankind continue quietly to set forth a tenth of the earth's produce for the support of the clergy; inasmuch as it is known to draw a blessing on the other nine parts, and is wonderfully comfortable to all ranks and descriptions of persons.

Yours, dear Lady Morley,

SYDNEY SMITH.

282.] To the Countess of Morley.

Combe Florey, 1829.

Dear Lady Morley,

I am sincerely sorry to hear of the protracted sufferings of Lord Morley; at the same time, my opinion always was, that the gout, entering upon a Peer of the realm, had too good a thing of it to be easily dispossessed.

I am going on fighting with bricklayers and carpenters, and shall ultimately make a very pretty place, and a very good house. Nothing so vile as the artificers of this country! A straight line in Somersetshire is that which includes the greatest possible distance between the extreme points. I should have had great pleasure in paying you a visit, but the Fates will have things their own way. I remain, yours,

Sydney Smith.

283.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Sept. 6th, 1829.

My dear Lady Grey,

The harvest here is got in without any rain. I mean, the wheat harvest. The cider is such an enormous crop, that it is sold at ten shillings per hogshead; so that a human creature may lose his reason for a penny.

I continue to be delighted with the country. My parsonage will be perfection. The only visitor I have had here is Mr. Jeffrey, who, I believe (though he richly deserves that good fortune), is scarcely known to Lord Grey and yourself. A man of rare talent and unbending integrity, who has been honest even in

Scotland; which is as if he were temperate and active at Capua.

Talking of honest men, I beg to be remembered to Lord Howick, on whom I lay great stress; from his understanding, rank, and courage, he will be an important personage in the days to come. Pat him on the back, and tell him that the safety and welfare of a country depend in a great measure on men like himself. Pray tell us of some good books to send for from the Subscription Library. I would tell *you*, if I had looked at any other book than the 'Builders' Price Book.' They are opposing poor Sir Thomas Lethbridge for the county of Somerset. I mean to vote and do everything I can for him: it is right to encourage converts.

Eternal rain here. Mr. Jeffrey wanted to persuade me that myrtles grew out-of-doors in Scotland, as here. Upon cross-examination, it turned out they were prickly, and that many had been destroyed by the family donkey.

SYDNEY SMITH.

284.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Sept. 29th, 1829.

My dear Lady Holland,

After thirty years of kindness, it was not necessary to apologize for not replying to my light and nonsensical effusions, which really required no answer.

I am going to Lord Morley's, where I was first bound to meet the Chancellor and Lady Lyndhurst. Nothing can be more insane than to make such engagements in my present state. I consider that every

day's absence from home costs me £10 in the villany of carpenters and bricklayers; for as I am my own architect and clerk of the works, you may easily imagine what is done when I am absent. I continue to be delighted with my house and place.

The Duke of Wellington has given, I think, the first signs I ever remarked of weakness, in prosecuting for libels; not for libels which regard a particular fact, as that for which the Chancellor has prosecuted, but for general abuse. I am sorry for the King, and for all his subjects upon whom the evils of age are falling.

I told —— if he would have patience he would have a little girl at last. I might have said, he might have twenty little girls. What is there to prevent him from having a family sufficient to exasperate the placid Malthus? I met your neighbours Mr. and Mrs. Calcott at Bowood. Reasonable, enlightened people. I was also much pleased with Lady Louisa, Lord Lansdowne's daughter; very clever and very amiable. Luttrell came over for a day, from whence I know not, but I thought not from good pastures; at least, he had not his usual soup-and-pattie look. There was a forced smile upon his countenance, which seemed to indicate plain roast and boiled; and a sort of apple-pudding depression, as if he had been staying with a clergyman.

God bless you, dear Lady Holland! Kindest regards to all.

SYDNEY SMITH.

285.] To JONATHAN GRAY, ESQ.—(York.)

Combe Florey, Taunton, Oct. 10th, 1829.

My dear Sir,

Nobody can more sincerely wish the prosperity of

the road from York to Oswaldkirk than I do. I wish to you hard materials, diligent trustees, gentle convexity, fruitful tolls, cleanly gutters, obedient parishes, favouring justices, and every combination of fortunate circumstances which can fall to the lot of any human highway. These are my wishes, but I can only *wish*. I cannot, from the bottom of Somersetshire, attend in person, as a letter (2*s*. 6*d*. postage) yesterday invited me to do. Perhaps you will have the goodness to scratch my name out of the list of trustees.

You will be glad to hear that I am extremely pleased with this place. Friendships and acquaintances are not speedily replaced; but as far as outward circumstances, I am quite satisfied. If ever you come into this country I shall be very glad to see you; and I remain, dear Sir, with sincere respect and good-will, yours truly, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I shall think on the 15th of my friends at the White Bear, Stillington. How honourable to English gentlemen, that, once or twice every month, half the men of fortune in England are jammed together at the White Bear, crushed into a mass at the Three Pigeons, or perspiring intensely at the Green Dragon!

286.] To N. FAZAKERLY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, October, 1829.

Dear Fazakerly,

I don't know anybody who would be less affronted at being called hare-brained than our friend who has so tardily conveyed my message, and I am afraid now he has only given you a part of it. The omission appears to be, that I had set up an hotel on the West-

ern road,* that it would be opened next spring, and I hoped for the favour of yours and Mrs. Fazakerly's patronage. 'Well-aired beds, neat wines, careful drivers, etc. etc.'

I shall have very great pleasure in coming to see you, and I quite agree in the wisdom of postponing that event till the rural Palladios and Vitruvii are chased away; I have fourteen of them here every day. The country is perfectly beautiful, and my parsonage the prettiest place in it.

I was at Bowood last week: the only persons there were sea-shore Calcott and his wife,—two very sensible, agreeable people. Luttrell came over for the day; he was very agreeable, but spoke too lightly, I thought, of veal soup. I took him aside, and reasoned the matter with him, but in vain; to speak the truth, Luttrell is not steady in his judgments on dishes. Individual failures with him soon degenerate into generic objections, till, by some fortunate accident, he eats himself into better opinions. A person of more calm reflection thinks not only of what he is consuming at that moment, but of the soups of the same kind he has met with in a long course of dining, and which have gradually and justly elevated the species. I am perhaps making too much of this; but the failures of a man of sense are always painful.

I quite agree about Napier's book. I did not think that any man would venture to write so true, bold, and honest a book; it gave me a high idea of his understanding, and makes me very anxious about his *caractère*. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

* Mr. Smith had just settled at Combe Florey.

287.] To John Murray, Esq.

Combe Florey, Dec. 14th, 1829.

Dear John Murray,

My house is assuming the forms of maturity, and a very capital house it will be for a parsonage,—far better than that at Foston. Your threats of coming to see us give us great pleasure. When will you come? Let it be for a good long stay. Pray remember me kindly to Mrs. Murray, and tell her that the only fault I find in her is an excessive attachment to bishops and tithes; an amiable passion, but which may be pushed too far.

I cannot say the pleasure it gives me that my old and dear friend Jeffrey is in the road to preferment. I shall not be easy till he is fairly on the Bench. His robes, God knows, will cost him little: one buck rabbit will clothe him to the heels.

I have been paying some aristocratic visits to Lord Bath and Lord Bathurst. Lady Bath is a very agreeable, conversible woman. Lord and Lady Bathurst, and Lady Georgiana, are charming. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this country,—forty and fifty miles together of fertility and interesting scenery. I hardly think I have any news to tell you. The Duke of Bedford has given in his adhesion to the Duke of Wellington, as have all the Tories, except four. Read 'Les Mémoires d'une Femme de Qualité sur Louis XVIII.' It is by Madame du Cayla, and extremely interesting.

I was not at all pleased with the article in the Edinburgh Review on the Westminster Review, and thought the Scotchmen had the worst of it. How foolish and

profligate, to show that the principle of general utility has no foundation, that it is often opposed to the interests of the individual! If this be not true, there is an end of all reasoning and all morals: and if any man asks, why am I to do what is generally useful? he should not be reasoned with, but called rogue, rascal, etc., and the mob should be excited to break his windows.

God bless you, dear Murray!

SYDNEY SMITH.

288.] TO MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, 1829.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

I should be glad to hear from you, and the more so, as I have heard lately that your little boy was not stout. This place is very beautiful, and in a most beautiful country. I need not say how my climate is improved. The neighbourhood much the same as all other neighbourhoods. Red wine and white, soup and fish, bad wit and good-nature. I am, after my manner, making my place perfect; and have twenty-eight people constantly at work.

I am often very unhappy at my loss. It is the first real misfortune which ever befell me.

Tell me some good books. Read Bourrienne's 'Memoirs;' they are very curious and entertaining. I think I have made a very wise move in coming here, and am perfectly satisfied with myself. I wish you were as much satisfied with me.

SYDNEY SMITH.

289.] To Sir George Philips.

No date: about the end of 1829.

My dear Philips,

I shall follow Vance's plan, and am much obliged to you for reminding me of it. My attack was slight, but well for a beginning; it was of the gout family, but hardly gout itself. I will come and see you, for old friendship's sake; but all countries will appear mean after this, and all houses comfortless after my parsonage, to which Foston House is as Sternhold and Hopkins to Lord Byron.

Read 'Laurie Todd,' by Galt. It is excellent; no surprising events, or very striking characters, but the humorous and entertaining parts of common life, brought forward in a tenour of probable circumstances. Read Raffles's Life. A virtuous, active, high-minded man; placed at last where he ought to be: a round man, in a round hole.

I am going on most prosperously with my buildings. I hope to be in town by the beginning of May. Your great Duke seems, like my ankle, to be getting stronger every day. He is an excellent Minister, and bids fair to be as useful in peace as in war, and to show the utility of beating swords into pruning-hooks.

And now, Sir George, let me caution you against indulgence in that enormous appetite of yours. You eat every day as much as four men in holy orders,—yourself a layman!

Ever, my dear Philips, yours most sincerely,

Sydney Smith.

290.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Clifton, Jan. 3rd, 1830.

My dear Murray,

I have not heard the particulars of Jeffrey becoming Lord Advocate, but I know enough to know they redound to your honour. Your conspiracy at Brougham Hall must have been very interesting. Principally Edinburgh Reviewers! How very singular! The Review began in high places (garrets), and ends in them.

There is an end of insurrection; I had made up my mind to make an heroic stand, till the danger became real and proximate, and then I should have been discreet and capitulating.

I can hardly picture to myself the rage and consternation of the Scotch Tories at this change, and at the liberality which is bursting out in every part of Scotland, where no lava and volcanic matter were suspected. I love liberty, but hope it can be so managed that I shall have soft beds, good dinners, fine linen, etc., for the rest of my life. I am too old to fight or to suffer. God bless you! Love to Mrs. Murray. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

291.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, April 17th, 1830.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

I have (as you say) had the gout, not severely, but it was a monition. How I came not to have had it years ago I cannot tell. My place is delightful; never was there a more delightful parsonage! Come and

seq it. Be ill, and require mild air and an affectionate friend, and set off for Combe Florey.

Have you read Moore? I come in, I see, for a little notice once or twice. I find the Peer and Poet (and I knew it only yesterday) has dedicated a stanza or two to me in Don Juan.

God bless you, dear Gena!

SYDNEY SMITH.

292.] To H. HOWARD, ESQ.*

Combe Florey, Taunton, Aug. 2nd, 1830.

My dear Sir,

The intelligence we have received today, from the kind transmission of the Carlisle paper, gave us all here sincere pleasure. It is a pure pleasure to me to see honourable men of ancient family restored to their birthright. I rejoice in the temple which has been reared to Toleration; and I am proud that I worked as a bricklayer's labourer at it—without pay, and with the enmity and abuse of those who were unfavourable to its construction. We are finishing here, and are in a very beautiful parsonage; come and see me. You owe me some recompense for my zeal.

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

293.] To THE HONOURABLE MISS FOX.

August, 1830.

My dear Miss Fox,

Merely to say that these and twenty such handbills†

* On the election of his son as M.P. for Carlisle.

† Letters to Swing.

were not, as you suppose, written by me, but by a neighbouring curate. They have had an excellent effect. There is one from Miss Swing, threatening to destroy crimping-irons for caps, and washing machines, and patent tea-kettles; vowing vengeance also on the new bodkin which makes two holes instead of one.

Justices' wives are agitated, and female constables have been sworn in. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

294.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1830.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am not without apprehensions for the new French Revolution; but I admire and rejoice. However it may end, it was nobly begun. I do not know what to do with the captive Ministers, but I am afraid I must hang them.

I knew Huskisson very well, and sincerely lament his loss. He was to me a very agreeable man; for he was always ready to talk on his own subjects, and was always clear, instructive, and good-natured. The Duke has got rid of his only formidable antagonist in the House of Commons, and it seems to me clear that the remnant of that party will now enlist under his standard; and I dare say they have by this time taken the marching shilling.

I was not disappointed by Plymouth. The papers were delighted with my urbanity and good-humour, and by the appearance of excellent health which I exhibited. They described my visit to the dockyard and the Caledonia, and the deep knowledge of my profes-

sion which I displayed. If the real Sir Sidney goes there, he will infallibly be taken for an impostor.

I have great pleasure in hearing from you. We are now old friends, and have run the better half of the race of life: you, on high ground; I, on low ground. Of the little that remains, I endeavour to make the best. I am a little surprised that I have scrambled through it so well as I have. That I have lived on good terms with so many good people, gives me more pleasure than any other reflection. I must beg of the noble Earl and you to continue to me as long as you can that source of pleasure. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

295.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Weston House, Oct. 15th, 1830.

My dear Lady Holland,

We are here on a visit to Sir George Philips, who has built a very magnificent house in the Holland House style, but of stone: a pretty place in a very ugly country.

I am very glad to see Charles in the Guards. He will now remain at home; for I trust that there will be no more embarkation of the Guards while I live, and that a captain of the Guards will be as ignorant of the colour of blood as the rector of a parish. We have had important events enough within the last twenty years. May all remaining events be culinary, amorous, literary, or anything but political!

Lord John Russell comes here today. His corporeal antipart, Lord N——, is here. Heaven send he

may not swallow John! There are, however, stomach-pumps, in case of accident. Bobus talks of coming to us in November. When I see him I will believe in him. We shall return home the beginning of November, stay till the end of the year, and then go to Bristol; that is, if the Church of England last so long; but there is a strong impression that there will be a rising of curates. Should anything of this kind occur, they will be committed to hard preaching on the tread-pulpit (a new machine); and rendered incapable of ever hereafter collecting great or small tithes.

I remain always your affectionate and obliged friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

296.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Weston House, Oct. 24th, 1830.

My dear Murray,

There will be no changes in the Government before Christmas; and by that time the Duke will probably have gained some recruits. He does not want numbers, but defenders. Whoever goes into his Cabinet, goes there as an inferior, to register the Duke's resolutions,—not as an equal, to assist in their formation; and this is a situation into which men of spirit and character do not choose to descend. The death of Huskisson has strengthened him very materially; his firmness, powers of labour, sagacity, and good-nature, and his vast military reputation, will secure his power. Averse from liberal measures, he will be as liberal as the times require; and will listen to instructed men on subjects where he has no opinions, or wrong ones.

During the first moments of the French Revolution,

La Fayette had almost resolved upon a republic, but was turned the other way by the remonstrances and representations of the American Minister.

The new Beer Bill has begun its operations. Everybody is drunk. Those who are not singing are sprawling. The sovereign people are in a beastly state.

You are rich and rambling; pray come and see us next year. Your very sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

297.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

November, 1830.

Dear Allen,

Pray tell me how Lord Holland is, as I do not at all like the accounts I have received from Lord John.

I am frightened at the state of the world; I shall either be burnt, or lose my tithes, or be forced to fight, or some harm will happen to disturb the drowsy slumbers of my useless old-age.

—— talks of coming to see me; but I have not the slightest belief. He will break down on the road, and return; or be lost in the Capua of Bowood; or be alarmed by Surrey incendiaries, and sit up all night surrounded by pails of water, squirts, and syringes. I have been visited by an old enemy, the lumbago; equally severe, as it seems, upon priest and anti-priests. I believe it comes from the stomach; at least it is to that organ that all medical men direct their curative intentions.

Tell me what is going to happen. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

298.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Nov. 21st, 1830.

My dear Lady Grey,

I never felt a more sincere pleasure than from Lord Grey's appointment. After such long toil, such labour, privation, and misrepresentation, that a man should be placed where Providence intended he should be,—that honesty and virtue should, at last, meet with their reward,—is a pleasure which rarely occurs in human life; and one which, I confess, I had not promised myself.

I am particularly glad that Brougham (if my friend Lord Lyndhurst must go out) is Chancellor, — for many reasons. I should have preferred Goderich for Home, Melbourne for Colonial, Secretary. The Duke of Richmond is well imagined. I am very glad Lord Durham is in the Cabinet, because I like him, and for better reasons. Sir James Graham surprises me. The appointment is excellent; but I should have thought there must have been so many great people who would have been clamorous. Pray give John Russell an office, and Macaulay is well worth your attention; make him Solicitor-General.

Adieu, my dear Lady Grey. Give my sincere and affectionate regards to Lord Grey. Thank God he has at last disappeared from that North Wall, against which so many sunless years of his life have been passed!

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

Sydney Smith.

299.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

8, *Gloucester-place, Clifton.*
No date: about 1830.

My dear Murray,

Pray tell me how you are all going on in Scotland. Is Jeffrey much damaged? They say he fought like a lion, and would have been killed had he been more visible; but that several people struck at him who could see nothing, and so battered infinite space instead of the Advocate.

I think Lord Grey will give me some preferment if he stays in long enough; but the upper parsons live vindictively, and evince their aversion to a Whig Ministry by an improved health. The Bishop of —— has the rancour to recover after three paralytic strokes, and the Dean of —— to be vigorous at eighty-two. And yet these are men who are called Christians!

Do these political changes make any difference in your business? You are so rich, that it is of no consequence; but still it is pleasant to progress. Give my kind regards to your excellent wife, and to Mrs. Jeffrey, a great favourite of mine.

SYDNEY SMITH.

300.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, November, 1830.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

What do you think of all these burnings? and have you heard of the new sort of burnings? Ladies' maids have taken to set their mistresses on fire. Two dowagers were burnt last week, and large rewards

are offered! They are inventing little fire-engines for the toilet-table, worked with lavender water!

This place is perfection; I never saw a more charming parsonage or a more beautiful country. I go to Bristol for a residence of six weeks at the end of the year, or sooner, if my house is set on fire.

Never was any Administration so completely and so suddenly destroyed; and, I believe, entirely by the Duke's declaration; made, I suspect, in perfect ignorance of the state of public feeling and opinion.

Adieu! Ever yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

301.] To SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 20th, 1830.

My dear Philips,

I was in hopes to have spent a quiet old-age; but all Europe is getting into a blaze, and that light-headed old fool, La Fayette, wants, I see, to crusade it for Poland. Swing is retiring. He is only formidable when he takes you unawares. He was stopped in his way from Kent before he reached us. I can give you no plan for employing the poor. I took great pains about these matters when I was a magistrate, but have forgotten all my plans. There are too many human beings on the earth: every two men ought to kill a third.

I should not be surprised if there were a dissolution of Parliament. I think the Tories will try to make a last rally with this Parliament, yet the fools ought to see that there is nothing between Lord Grey and Cobbett.

—— spent a fortnight with us; he was remarkably well and contradictory—clear of gout and of assent.

Read the 'Collegians,' an admirable novel, but an old one, of two or three years' standing.

SYDNEY SMITH.

302.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Bristol, Jan. 3rd, 1831.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

Brougham has kindly offered me an exchange of livings, which I declined with many thanks. I think the Administration will last some time, because I think the country decided upon Reform; and if the Tories will not permit Lord Grey to carry it into effect, they must turn it over to Hunt and Cobbett.

I think the French Government far from stable,—like Meynell's horses at the end of a long day's chase. The Government of the country is in the hands of armed shopkeepers; and when the man with the bayonet deliberates, his reasons are more powerful than civilians can cope with. I am tired of liberty and revolution! Where is it to end? Are all political agglutinations to be unglued? Are we prepared for a second Heptarchy, and to see the King of Sussex fighting with the Emperor of Essex, or marrying the Dowager Queen of Hampshire?

It would be amusing enough if the chances of preferment were, after all, to make me your neighbour. Many is the quarrel and making up we should have together. Thank you, my dear friend, for saying that proximity to me would make your life happier! The

rose that spreads its fragrance over the garden might as well thank the earth beneath for bearing it.

You see Jeffrey has been nearly killed at his election. How funny to see all the Edinburgh Reviewers in office! God bless you, my dear friend!

SYDNEY SMITH.

303.] To COLONEL FOX.

Combe Florey, Feb. 19th, 1831.

My dear Charles,

There is an excellent man here, Major C——, late of the 32nd, who instructed you, I believe, in the rudiments of your homicide profession. He is now on half-pay, has been in the service thirty years, and was in all the innumerable battles of the Duke of Wellington, ending in Waterloo, where he was wounded. Every man wishes to be something which he is not; and upon this general plan of human nature, poor Major C—— is expiring to be a colonel by brevet, I believe it is called; it carries with it no increase of pay, and is a mere appellation. Is this easy to be effected? If not over-difficult, lend the Major a helping hand; he is really a man of great merit, but has no friends to help him. He has many minds to write to you, but is modest, and will never do it; moreover Irish Majors are not clever at inditing letters. I write wholly without his knowledge. He and Mrs. —— have been remarkably civil to us, and I have taken a liking to him.

We are settled, as you may possibly have heard, in a most beautiful part of Somersetshire, where we expect Mrs. Fox and you the first time you are within

ten miles of us; for I have not the vanity to suppose that we could act upon you at a greater distance. I am truly sorry to hear that the most amiable and most able of all Dukes of Lancaster is so ill with the gout: I thank God I have hitherto kept off that toe-consuming tyrant. I think Lord Grey seems to be emerging from the dark fog in which he began his career. If your father turns him off, he must give Cobbett the Garter instead of the cord. I see nobody between Lord Grey and revolution.

Pray remember me most kindly to dear Mrs. Fox, and if she has forgotten me, help her to some primary tokens;—grace and slenderness, gravity and taciturnity, and other marks which you can hit off with a bold pencil. I am panting to know a little what passes in the world. I meant to have been in London ere now, but have been prevented; above all, I want to see Brougham on his sack of wool. I see (meaning to say only a few words about poor Major ——) I have written a long letter; but if you have not time to read it, make Mrs. Fox read it, and tell you the contents.

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

304.] TO MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Feb. 25th, 1831.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

Our friends, I am afraid, have lost ground by their Budget, and there is no dissembling that they are weak; however, I hardly think the Tories would be bold enough to *wish* to succeed them just now. An-

other week will decide the fate of parties, perhaps of the kingdom. I have a very bad opinion of public affairs; I never thought so ill of the world. Arbitrary governments are giving way everywhere, and will doom us to half a century of revolutions and expensive wars. It must be waded through, but I wish it had all been done before I was born. Wild beasts must be killed in the progress of civilization, but thank God that my ancestors,—that is, not mine, for I have none, but Mr. Meynell's ancestors,—did this some centuries ago. Write to me, and God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

305.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Feb. 27th, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I cannot help thinking of your new state. When I am very nervous I always do sums in arithmetic, and take camphor-julep. Don't be afraid,—I am sure, from several signs, it will do; and don't pretend to say you don't care, the truth being that you *do* care, from the very bottom of your heart. I meant to come to town, to afford you my spiritual consolation during the crisis, but I had an alarm about my daughter; she had a very severe attack, and her recovery for some time was so slow that I was frightened; she is now recovered. I hope to see you in the spring, where you are. If Lord Bathurst is there, I shall break the windows.

Brougham's speech will make a great impression, and be very useful to the Administration. The world seems to be improving decidedly; I thought it would

have come to an end before now. I have been exhorting my little friend Jeffrey to make a great speech on Reform. Pray perceive his worth and great talents.

Give my kind regards to my Lord. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

306.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

The person in question—or rather, the parson in question,—Mr. ——, is respectable, of small preferment, large family, good private fortune, moderate understanding, great expectations from relations; a sincere friend to the emancipation of the Catholics, when there was danger and merit in publishing such opinions.

Once for all—I take it for granted that neither Lord Grey nor you think me such an absurd coxcomb as to imagine that, with inferior information, experience, and talents, I can offer any advice to Lord Grey; the truth is, that I attach such very little importance to my own opinions, that I have never the slightest objection to give them. And so, without any more preamble, or any repetition of preamble, I will tell you from time to time what occurs to me. I take it for granted you are prepared to make Peers, to force the measure if it fail again, and I would have this intention half-officially communicated in all the great towns before the Bill was brought in. If this is not done—I mean, if Peers are not made—there will be a general convulsion, end-

ing in a complete revolution. Do not be too dignified, but yield to the necessity of demi-official communications. If the Huskisson party in the Cabinet are refractory about making Peers (should such a creation be necessary) turn out the Huskisson party. Their power is gone; they are entirely at your mercy. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

307.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

The only fault in your character is, that you never read my Taunton speeches; though this may, perhaps, be accounted for by your porter never bringing you the papers, which I always send to you, as I have done this week. It seems absurd to make speeches in a little market-town; but I have made a constant rule in party matters to contribute my quota, however insignificant, and to blow a trumpet, though it is but a penny trumpet.

We are famous here for cheeses, called Cheddar cheeses; and I have taken the liberty to send you one, made by a reforming farmer.

Pray do not be good-natured about Bristol. I must have ten people hanged, and twenty transported, and thirty imprisoned; it is absolutely necessary to give the multitude a severe blow, for their conduct at Bristol has been most atrocious. You will save lives by it in the end. There is no plea of want, as there was in the agricultural riots.

SYDNEY SMITH.

308.] To the Countess Grey.

March 5th, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am just returned from my living in Devonshire, where I was called by a sort of rebellion of my curate. I find here your letter, for which many and best thanks.

I am now quite at my ease about Lord Grey and yourself. Whether Lord Grey will go out or not, I cannot conjecture, as I know so little of the way Parliament is leaning; but if he is driven out, it will be with an immense increase of reputation, with the gratitude and best wishes of the country, and with the sincere joy of his friends that he has ventured upon office, because they must know that he will be a happier man for all that has taken place. The plan is as wise as it is bold. I call it a magnificent measure, and am heartily glad it is understood to be his individually. God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

S. S.

309.] To Lady Holland.

Combe Florey, March 18th, 1831.

My dear Lady Holland,

Of course it is impossible to reflect upon such extensive changes without being a little nervous; but, *taking the state of public opinion into the question*, I think it a wise and proper measure. Yesterday I delivered a glowing harangue at Taunton, in favour of it; justice compels me to say that there were only five coats in the room; the rest were jackets and smock-

frocks. They were delighted with me, and said they should like to bring me in as a member.

Never write me any apologies, dear Lady Holland. You are always sure of me. Sometimes I hear and see less of yourself and Lord Holland, but I am irrevocably attached to you both. It would be odd, after thirty years of kindness and friendship from you and yours, if I were to alter for the little bit of life which remains to me. It will seem very odd to me to pass through Downing-street, and to see all my old friends turned into official dignitaries.

I think the Jews should be kept for the private tyranny and intolerance of the Bishops. Thirty thousand Jews!—it is but a small matter! Do not be too hard upon the Church!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

310.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Sidmouth, April 25th, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

Bold King! bold Ministers! The immediate effect of the measure is, that I had no sleep all last night. A meeting of freeholders at the inn at Sidmouth; much speaking, and frequent sound of Lord Grey's name through the wall. I had a great mind, being a Devonshire freeholder, to appear suddenly in nightcap and dressing-gown, and to make a speech.

I have left off writing myself, but I have persuaded a friend of mine, a Mr. Dyson, to publish his speech to the freeholders, which I believe will be in your hands by Wednesday or Thursday, from Ridgway. You

may suppose it to be mine, but it is not; and I ask it as a particular favour from Lord Grey and you, that you will not mention you have received it from me, or that I had any influence in producing it. It is a mite added to the public stock of liberal principles, and not worth caution or trouble; but my plan has always been to contribute my mite, and in my own particular way.

My sincere hope is, that all this political agitation may not worry you, nor injure the health of Lord Grey.

SYDNEY SMITH.

311.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

May, 1831.

My dear Lady Holland,

* * * * *

I met John Russell at Exeter. The people along the road were very much disappointed by his smallness. I told them he was much larger before the Bill was thrown out, but was reduced by excessive anxiety about the people. This brought tears into their eyes!

S. S.

312.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

August 18*th*, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am truly glad to hear such an account of Lord Grey. Pray keep us at peace if it be possible, and deal only in glowing expostulations, not in blows. There is no wish for war in the country, quite the contrary. It is a mere cry to defeat the Bill;—but

I am sure nobody wishes for peace more than Lord Grey.

I am staying at Lord ——'s, where is that honest politician —— ——. I must confess that the rogue is a sensible, agreeable man, but it vexes me to see such base profligacy so rewarded.

SYDNEY SMITH.

313.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 6th, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am very anxious about Lord Grey, and it will be a favour—a real favour—if you will write me a line,—literally a line. I don't want to know whether he is in or out, but whether he is satisfied with himself, and well. His speech was admirable; and so, as I learn from my letters, it was considered on the spot.

I send my speech, which missed you the last time I sent it. It is of little value, but honest. I found public meetings everywhere, and the utmost alarm at the idea of the Bill being thrown out; coachmen, ostlers, inside and outside passengers, barmaids, and waiters, all eager for news,

From your grateful and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

314.] PROTEST.

Extract from the 'Times.'

The following Protest has been entered (*we hear*) upon the journals of the House of Lords by the new Bishop of Worcester.

Dissentient,—Because the Address says that we have been dragged into the war, whereas we are deliberately walking into it.

2nd. Because scenes of horror, injustice, and oppression are never wanting upon the face of the earth; and war, arising from the generous spirit of repressing such evils, would be interminable.

3rd. Because we are ruined.

4th. Because no evil to arise from the ascendancy of France over Spain would be equal to the evil of going to war to prevent it.

5th. Because it is very probable that the Bourbons may be destroyed in the contest they have brought on themselves, without the necessity of our going to war at all to effect so desirable an object.

6th. Because a system of absolute neutrality, so essential at this moment to the welfare of Great Britain, is, from our insular situation, at all times a much safer policy here than it would be for any continental nation.

7th. Because such is the wicked and profligate extravagance with which all British wars are conducted, and so ineffectual the control exercised by a corrupt House of Commons over our national expenses, that nothing but the dread of invasion or the preservation of faith should induce this country to give up the advantages of peace.

SYDNEY VIGOUR.

315.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

Many thanks for keeping us at peace. Life would not be worth having if there was a war.

I hope you have all escaped from influenza better than we have, for Mrs. Sydney has been seriously ill, and has escaped upon hard terms.

I am going a tour for a week to Dunster Castle—Lord Fortescue's,—and to Clovelly, a beautiful tract of country; and then I am going to Sidmouth, where I have taken a large house as close to the sea as your ball-room is to your drawing-room. I invite you and Lord Grey to come and see me; and there is a large Russian Princess who would be glad to make your acquaintance.

The passing the Bill in such weather, and against such opposition, will be honourably remembered, and is all virtue and courage. Lord Grey's path of honourable distinction is straight and clear, and nothing can now prevent him from getting to the end of it. You may depend upon it, that any attempt of the Lords to throw it out will be the signal for the most energetic resistance from one end of the kingdom to the other.

The harvest here is enormous, such as was never known in the memory of man; the weather celestial, and the sickness universal. The stoutest labourers are soon incapable of the smallest exertion.

SYDNEY SMITH.

316.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, July, 1831.

My dear Lady Holland,

The weather here appears to have resembled the weather of the Metropolis. At present it is oppressively hot. All my family are here; I feel patriarchal.

Cholera has not yet come amongst us, but it is at either end of our line,—at Exeter and Plymouth, and at Bristol. Seeing but little company, and not hearing every day how Thompson, and Simpson, and Jackson were attacked, I think less about it.

Philosopher Malthus came here last week. I got an agreeable party for him of unmarried people. There was only one lady who had had a child; but he is a good-natured man, and, if there are no appearances of approaching fertility, is civil to every lady. Malthus is a real moral philosopher, and I would almost consent to speak as inarticulately, if I could think and act as wisely.

Read Cicero's 'Letters to Atticus,' translated by the Abbé Mongon, with excellent notes. I sit in my beautiful study, looking upon a thousand flowers, and read agreeable books, in order to keep up arguments with Lord Holland and Allen. I thank God heartily for my comfortable situation in my old-age,—above my deserts, and beyond my former hopes.

SYDNEY SMITH.

317.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Castle Hill, Aug. 18th, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I have anxiously reflected whether you mean to prorogue till after Christmas or not, and which is the better plan of proceeding. Supposing there had been no riots at Bristol, I should say, postpone till after the Christmas holidays, and let some such letter as this find its way accidentally into the papers :—

" My dear Lord,—I am very much obliged to you

for placing before me so clearly your views respecting the present state of the country, and the policy which His Majesty's Ministers ought to pursue. I am so far from being offended at the liberty you have taken, that I feel grateful for your candour and your sincerity. It must occur to you, however, that your information, and that of any other individual not in His Majesty's Government, must necessarily be very imperfect; and that, if we differ on what is to be done, it is most probably because we reason upon very different premises. You know me well enough to be aware that the character of my Administration, my only hope of deserving well of my country, my happiness, and most probably my health for the few years remaining to me, all depend upon the passing of this Bill. I have the most acute interest to decide properly upon the period at which it may be re-introduced to Parliament; and I have information to guide me, which is, as it ought to be, accessible to very few persons besides myself.

"I am thoroughly convinced that the best chance of carrying the Bill quietly and effectually through both Houses of Parliament is, by postponing its introduction till after Christmas. I have the strongest expectations that it will be so carried; and you may be assured that my views and plans for that purpose would be materially impeded and endangered, if I were to yield to the well-meaning importunities of my friends, and agree to an earlier period. I have been forty years before my country, in which I have never sacrificed an English interest for the love of office. Give me a few weeks of confidence, and you will see that I have served you faithfully, honourably, and I

firmly believe, successfully, in this last struggle against corruption.

"GREY."

These sentiments, put into Lord Grey's elegant and correct language, and published *by mistake*, would have a great effect.

You must send down a special commission to Bristol, and hang ten people in the streets, and publish a proclamation. This done, I hardly think these riots need alter your plan of not meeting till after Christmas, if you have such a plan. I make no apology for writing my nonsense to you and Lord Grey. I prescribe for Lord Grey repeated doses of warm salvolatile and water. Pray write me a line to say he is better, and give Macaulay a place. God bless you both!

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S. (*To Earl Grey.*)—I take it for granted you are quite resolved to make Peers to an extent which may enable you to carry the measure. The measure is one of such indispensable necessity, that you will be completely justified by public opinion, and as completely overwhelmed by public opinion, if you shrink from such a step; so I have done with this.

Cultivate Whishaw; he is one of the most sensible men in England, and his opinions valuable, if he will give them. It would give great satisfaction if a Prebend were in course of time given to Malthus. Lord ——'s brother is a good scholar, a gentleman, with a mind not unecclesiastical, thoroughly honest, and to be depended upon. Caldwell is fit for any ecclesiastical situation, for his prudence, sense, character, and

honesty;—a great friend of Whishaw's. Wood will tell you about ——; you may trust him as long as you have anything to give him. Wait till after Christmas for the meeting of Parliament. I am sure this is right. I give you great credit for Lamb's Conduit Fields.

Pray keep well, and do your best, with a gay and careless heart. What is it all, but the scratching of pismires upon a heap of earth? Rogues are careless and gay, why not honest men? Think of the Bill in the morning, and take your claret in the evening, totally forgetting the Bill. You have done admirably up to this time.

318.] To Mrs. Meynell.

Saville-row, September, 1831.

My dear G.,

I am just stepping into the carriage to be installed* by the Bishop, but cannot lose a post in thanking you. It is, I believe, a very good thing, and puts me at my ease for life. I asked for nothing—never did anything shabby to procure preferment. These are pleasing recollections. My pleasure is greatly increased by the congratulations of good and excellent friends like yourself. God bless you!

Sydney Smith.

319.] To Lady Elizabeth Bulteel.

Combe Florey, 1831.

My dear Lady Elizabeth,

I cannot say how much obliged we are by your

* In the Prebendal Stall at St. Paul's, given to him by Lord Grey. —Ed.

kindness in sending us what must have cost you so much labour to write, and has given us so much pleasure to read.*

I hope you have no mobs and no cholera; fire upon the first, and go into the warm bath for the other, but do not imagine you will have no cholera in your neighbourhood. I do not altogether see why your coming here should depend on your going to town. Nothing does husband and wife so much good as occasional absences from home, and you could go nowhere where you would be more heartily received.

I hear now and then from Lady Grey, and was delighted to learn from her last that my Lord was quite well again. I wish, for a thousand reasons, but for none more than the consideration of your father's health, that Reform was carried. There are persons who can govern kingdoms as gaily and with as much *sang-froid* as they would play at draughts: such is not the case with your excellent father; affairs get into his heart, and circulate with his blood.

Pray remember me very kindly to Mr. Bulteel, and believe me, dear Lady Elizabeth, ever sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

320.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

20, *Saville-row, December*, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I went to the debate. Lord —— and Lord —— were horrible! I wish apologies were abolished by Act of Parliament. They are all children to Lord

* A beautiful song, which Mr. Smith had much admired when hearing it sung at Saltram by Lady E. Bulteel.

Grey. He made an excellent speech, as prudent as it was spirited.

I submit the following little criticisms. Lord Grey should stand further from the bench, and more in the body of the house; should stand more upright, and raise his arm (which no Englishman *does*, and all foreigners *do*) from the shoulder, and not from the elbow. But he speaks beautifully, and is a torch among tapers. Next to Lord Grey, I like Lord Harrowby; Lord —— speaks like a schoolboy. The whole debate was rather conciliatory. Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

321.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, December, 1831.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

I behave well, always well, but you have a little infirmity,—tactility, or touchiness. Pray guard against this; it grows upon you; and do not be angry with me for telling you this, for that would be an odd way of proving you were innocent of the charge.

Lord Grey is well; the King firm; the Bill will pass, partly by the defalcation of its opponents, partly by the creation of peers. Cholera will spread all over England. Read nothing about it, and say nothing about it; but when you are in the cold stage, send for one of my letters and place it near your heart, and your foolish doctor will ascribe your recovery to himself.

I had no idea Mrs. Partington would make such a fortune; I sent my speech to nobody, but it was co-

pied into the 'Times.' I am told it is up at the caricature shops, but I did not see it.

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

322.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Bristol, 1831.

Dear Lady Morley,

I have taken possession of my preferment. The house is in Amen-corner,—an awkward name on a card, and an awkward annunciation to the coachman on leaving any fashionable mansion. I find too (sweet discovery!) that I give a dinner every Sunday, for three months in the year, to six clergymen and six singing-men, at one o'clock. Do me the favour to drop in as Mrs. Morley. I did the duty at St. Paul's; the organ and music were excellent.

Seeing several carpenters at work at Lord Dudley's, I called; and after he had expatiated at some length on the danger of the times, I learnt that he was boarding up his windows in imitation of the Duke of Wellington, who has been fortified in a similar manner ever since the Coronation. I am afraid the Lords will fling out the Bill, and that I shall pocket the sovereign of Mr. Bulteel; in that case, I believe and trust Lord Grey will have recourse to Peer-making.

I went to Court, and, horrible to relate! with strings to my shoes instead of buckles,—not from Jacobinism, but ignorance. I saw two or three Tory lords looking at me with dismay, was informed by the Clerk of the Closet of my sin, and gathering my sacerdotal petticoats about me (like a lady conscious of thick ankles),

I escaped further observation. My residence is in February, March, and July.

Lady Holland is to have an express from the Lords every ten minutes, and is encamped for that purpose in Burlington-street. Adieu, dear Lady Morley! Excuse my nonsense. A thousand thanks for your hospitality and good-nature.

SYDNEY SMITH.

323.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Saville-row, 1831.

Dear Lady Morley,

No news. War against Holland, which may possibly swell into a general war.

—— has been to Cambridge to place his son; in other words, he has put him there to spend his money, to lose what good qualities he has, and to gain nothing useful in return. If men had made no more progress in the common arts of life than they have in education, we should at this moment be dividing our food with our fingers, and drinking out of the palms of our hands.

I shall be at home to receive you in a few days. Why should you suppose, because you have more sense and wit than other people, that you should have less feeling and compassion for the real miseries of your fellow-creatures? In discussing this subject, I have always some individual widow in my mind; —— —— was the last; if I succeeded, to her be the glory. Be assured Lord Plunket is devoted to you; and next to him, your sincerely obliged clergyman,

SYDNEY SMITH.

324.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Jan. 7th, 1832.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope to see you in the middle of this month; in the meantime a few words.

The delay has had this good, that it will make the creation of Peers less surprising and alarming; everybody expects it, as a matter of course. I am for forty, to make things safe in committees. I liked Lord Grey's letter to Lord Ebrington. I am a great friend to these indirect communications in a free Government. Pray beg of Lord Grey to keep well. He has the thing on hand, and I have no doubt of a favourable issue. I see an open sea beyond the icebergs. I am afraid the Muscovite meditates war. Perhaps he is only saying to the French, "Don't go too far; for my eye is upon you, and my paw shall be so also, if you run riot." You may perhaps be forced to take O'Connell by the throat.

I cannot get the Bishop of —— to pay me my dilapidations. He keeps on saying he will pay, but the money does not appear; I shall seize his mitre, robes, sermons, and charges to his clergy, and put them up to auction.

We have had the mildest weather possible. A great part of the vegetable world is deceived, and beginning to blossom,—not merely foolish young plants without experience, but old plants that have been deceived before by premature springs; and for such, one has no pity. It is as if Lady —— were to complain of being seduced and betrayed.

I cannot tell what has happened to our Church of St. Paul. I have belonged to him for four months;

he has cost me two or three hundred pounds, and I have not received a shilling from him. I hope to find him in a more munificent mood the ensuing quarter.

Yours most respectfully and affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

325.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Supposed 1832.

My dear Lady Grey,

I did not like to say much to you about public affairs today, because I thought you were not well, but I *must* take the weight off my soul! I am alarmed for Lord Grey; so are many others.

Is there a strong probability, amounting almost to a certainty, that the Bill will be carried *without* a creation of Peers? No.—Then make them. But the King will *not*.—Then resign. But if the King *will* create, we shall lose more than we gain.—I doubt it. Many threaten, who will not vote against the Bill.—At all events, you will have done all you can to carry it. If you *do* create, and it fail, you are beaten with honour: and the country will distinguish between its enemies and its friends.

The same reason applies to dissensions in the Cabinet, of which (though perhaps unfounded) I have heard many rumours. Turn out the anti-Reformers; you will then be either victorious, or defeated with honour. You are just in that predicament in which the greatest boldness is the greatest prudence. You must either carry the Bill, or make it as clear as day that you have done all in your power to do so. There is not a moment to lose. The character of Lord Grey is a

valuable public possession. It would be a very serious injury if it were destroyed, and there will be no public man in whom the people will place the smallest confidence. Lord Grey must say to his colleagues to-morrow: "Brothers, the time draws near; you must choose this day between good and evil; either you or I must perish this night, before the sun falls. I am sure the Bill will not pass without a creation: it *may* pass with one. It is the only expedient for doing what, from the bottom of my heart, I believe the country requires. I *will* create, and create immediately; or resign."

Mackintosh, Whishaw, Robert Smith, Rogers, Luttrell, Jeffrey, Sharpe, Ord, Macaulay, Fazakerley, Lord Ebrington—where will you find a better jury, one more able and more willing to consider every point connected with the honour, character, and fame of Lord Grey? There would not be among them a dissentient voice.

If you wish to be happy three months hence, create Peers. If you wish to avoid an old-age of sorrow and reproach, create Peers. If you wish to retain my friendship, it is of no sort of consequence whether you create Peers or not; I shall always retain for you the most sincere gratitude and affection, without the slightest reference to your political wisdom, or your political errors; and may God bless and support you and Lord Grey in one of the most difficult moments that ever occurred to any public man!

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Though the natural reluctance of Lord Grey to have recourse to this extreme measure was shared by every member of the Cabinet, with greater or less strength, they were fully agreed that, if the Reform Bill could be carried by no other means, *that* must be resorted

to. Lord Grey accordingly took to the King their unanimous resolution, that they must have the power to create Peers to any extent they might deem necessary. Fortunately, they were not compelled to exercise it.—ED.]

326.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, 1832.

I am truly sorry, my dear Lady Holland, to hear such bad accounts of Holland House. I am always inquiring about you from all London people, and can hear nothing that pleases me. Try if you cannot send me some more agreeable intelligence.

We have had several people here; among the rest, poor dear Whishaw and John Romilly. I was quite alarmed to hear of his fall, but he was good enough to write us a line today. He should never lay aside a crutch-stick, after the manner of Lord Holland. Luttrell comes here next week, and —— has appeared by excuse, in his usual manner. We are just returned from Linton and Lymouth;—the finest thing in England, and pronounced by three Mediterranean gentlemen, who were present, to be equal to anything in that sea. The Fazakerleys came there by accident, and to the same house where we were staying. Nobody to me more agreeable than Fazakerley.

The accounts, I am sorry to say, are not very good of Lord John's success in Devonshire. The Whigs whom I saw at Linton looked very black about it. We have had a delightful summer, and everybody has been pleased with our place; nobody more so than Whishaw. By the bye, let me say a word about John Romilly; a very agreeable and a very well-informed young man:—very candid, though a *doctrinaire*, with very good

abilities, and legal abilities too, such as I am sure will ensure his success. The whole effect of him, to me, is very agreeable. I hear that the success of Jeffrey and Murray is certain; that of Abercrombie doubtful.

S. S.

327.] To the Countess Grey.

May 17th, 1832.

I sent you yesterday, my dear Lady Grey, another penny trumpet, blown at your political funeral. I wish you joy most heartily of your resurrection. Accept for Lord Grey and yourself my most sincere congratulations. You are now beyond the reach of accidents, and I hope will enjoy two or three years of entertaining dominion: more I am sure you do not want, if so much.

Sydney Smith.

328.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Aug. 27th, 1832.

My dear Lady Grey,

Are you gone to Howick? You must have great pleasure, the greatest pleasure, in going there triumphant and all-powerful. It must be, I fear, a hasty pleasure, and that you cannot be long spared.

One of your greatest difficulties is the Church; you must positively, in the course of the first session, make a provision for the Catholic clergy of Ireland, and make it out of the revenues of the Irish Protestant Church. I have in vain racked my brains to think how this can be avoided, but it cannot. It will divide the Cabinet and agitate the country, but you must face the danger

and conquer, or be conquered by it. It cannot be delayed. There is no alternative between this and a bloody war, and reconquest of Ireland. I hope you will, if possible, make the Bishops bring in their own Reform Bill. They will throw it on the Government if they can. I foresee the probability of a Protestant tempest; but you must keep the sea, and not run into harbour: such indeed is not your practice. The Tories are daunted and intimidated here, and, I think, the members returned will be Reformers. Pray put down the unions as soon as Parliament meets.

We are all well. Cholera has made one successful effort at Taunton, and not repeated it, though a month has elapsed. Lord John Russell comes here on Saturday, and the Fazakerleys on Friday; so we shall be a strong Reform party for a few days. My butler said, in the kitchen, "he should let the country people peep through the shutters at Lord John for a penny apiece." A very reasonable price. I wonder what he would charge for Lord Grey, if he should come here.

The cholera will have killed by the end of the year about one person in every thousand. Therefore it is a thousand to one (supposing the cholera to travel at the same rate) that any person does not die of the cholera in any one year. This calculation is for the mass; but if you are prudent, temperate, and rich, your chance is at least five times as good that you do not die of the cholera,—in other words, five thousand to one that you do not die of cholera in a year; it is not far from two millions to one that you do not die any one day from cholera. It is only seven hundred and thirty thousand to one that your house is not burnt down any one day. Therefore it is nearly three

times as likely that your house should be burnt down any one day, as that you should die of cholera; or, it is as probable that your house should be burnt down three times in any one year, as that you should die of cholera.

An enormous harvest here, and every appearance of peace and plenty. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! My very kind regards to Lord Grey and Georgina.

SYDNEY SMITH.

329.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Nov. 3rd, 1832.

My dear Allen,

I saw Mackintosh: he wishes that his father's work should be as he left it, without any addition; in other words, the statue, without a modern nose or arm. Upon reflection, I should feel as he does: pray talk to Lord Holland on the subject, and send me your united opinions. We are the natural guardians of Mackintosh's literary fame; will that not be in some degree tainted and exposed to ridicule, if his history is furnished by a regular Paternoster hack? My leaning is, that such would be the consequence; and I told Mackintosh I would consult Holland House and tell him the result, but that I leant to his opinions.

Believe me, truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

330.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Nov. 21st, 1832.

My dear friend,

Do not imagine I have heard with indifference of

your success, or that of Giant Jeffrey. It has given me the most sincere pleasure. The gods are said to rejoice at the sight of a wise man struggling with adversity. The gods will please themselves; but *I* like to see wise men better when the struggle is over, and when they are in the enjoyment of that power and distinction to which, by their long labour and their merits, they are so justly entitled.

I am afraid of the war. Whether our friends could have avoided it or not, I know not, but it will be dreadfully unpopular; I should not be surprised if it were fatal to them. Pray say if Abercrombie is sure of his election. His ambition is to be Speaker, and I should not be surprised if he succeeded. He is the wisest-looking man I know. It is said he can see through millstones and granite.

What oceans of absurdity and nonsense will the new liberties of Scotland disclose! Yet this is better than the old infamous jobbing, and the foolocracy under which it has so long laboured. Don't be too ardent, Johnny, and restrain yourself; and don't get into scrapes by phrases, but get the character of a very prudent practical man. I remain here in a state of very inert vegetation till the end of February, and then we meet in London. Pray take care that Jeffrey is the first Judge. I have that much at heart; and to thwart him in that nonsense about Cockburn. I have done all I can to effect the same object.

We are living here with windows all open, and eating our own ripe grapes grown in the open air; but, in revenge, there is no man within twenty miles who knows anything of history, or angles, or of the mind. I send Mrs. Murray my epigram on Professor Airey,

of Cambridge, the great astronomer and mathematician, and his beautiful wife:—

Airey alone has gain'd that double prize
Which forced musicians to divide the crown:
His works have raised a mortal to the skies,
His marriage vows have drawn an angel down.

S. S.

331.] To Mrs. Meynell.

Combe Florey, Dec. 16th, 1832.

Dear Mrs. Meynell,

I often think of you, though I do not write to you. I am delighted to find the elections have gone so well. The blackguards and democrats have been defeated almost universally, and I hope Meynell is less alarmed, though I am afraid he will never forgive me Mrs. Partington; in return, I have taken no part in the county election, and am behaving quite like a dignitary of the Church; that is, I am confining myself to digestion.

Read Memoirs of Constant, Buonaparte's valet-de-chambre, and Mrs. Trollope's 'Refugees in America.' The story is foolish, but the picture of American manners excellent; and why should not the Americans be ridiculed, if they are ridiculous?

I see no prospect of a change of Ministry, but think the Whigs much stronger than they were when we were in town. I have come to the end of my career, and have nothing now to do but to grow old merrily and to die without pain. Yours,

Sydney Smith.

332.] To Sir George Philips.

Combe Florey, Dec. 22nd, 1832.

My dear Philips,

You seem to have had a neck-and-neck race; however, if the breath is out of his body, that is all that was wanted. I congratulate you upon the event; and, considering what it may lead to in George's instance, it is an ample indemnification for the defeat of Kidderminster. You must keep away from the House, and then no harm will follow; and now Birmingham has Members of its own, the county Members will be less wanted. I can only say, thank God I am not in the House of Commons. Our election here is contested by the obstinate perseverance of a Mr. ——, who, without a shadow of chance, has put the other Members to the expense of a poll. Many decayed eggs have been cast upon him, which have much defiled his garments; and this is all, as far as I can see or smell, that he has acquired by his exertions. We have been a good deal amused by seeing Sir —— perform the part of patriot and Church reformer.

We have read 'Zohrab the Hostage' with the greatest pleasure. If you have not read it, pray do. I was so pleased with it that I could not help writing a letter of congratulation and collaudation to Morier, the author, who, by the bye, is an excellent man.

I see Lord Grey, the Chancellor, and the Archbishop of Canterbury have had a meeting, which I suppose has decided the fate of the Church.

Ever yours, my dear Philips,

Sydney Smith.

333.] To Lord Holland.

Combe Florey, Jan. 22nd, 1833.

My dear Lord Holland,

Nothing can be of so little consequence as what I write, or do not write; but I wish to own only the trumpery good, or the trumpery evil, of which I am the author. A pamphlet, called the 'Logan Stone' (which I conjecture to be one of conservation and alarm), has been attributed to me. I give you my honour I have neither written nor read a line of it. If by chance it is mentioned before you, pray say what I say.

Sydney Smith.

334.] To Lord Holland.

Combe Florey, Jan. 25th, 1833.

* * * * *

I do not think my short and humble epistle deserves the merciless quizzing it has received tonight. No man likes to have writings imputed to him which he did not write; and, above all, when those works are an attack upon old friends to whom he is under the greatest obligations.

* * * * *

S. S.

335.] To the Countess of Morley.

Combe Florey, January, 1833.

Dear Lady Morley,

As this is the season for charades and bad pleasantry, I shall say, from a very common appellation

for Palestine, remove the syllable of which egotists are so fond, and you will have the name of the other party which the report concerns; but I repeat again, we as yet know nothing about it. Stapleton's letter is decisive, and puts an end to the question. You have no idea how the sacred Valley of Flowers has improved ever since you were here; but I hope you will, before the year is over, come and see. Mrs. Sydney allows me to accept the present you sent me; I stick it in my heart, as P. B. sticks a rose in his button-hole. . . . . Do you want a butler or respectable-looking groom of the chambers? I will be happy to serve you in either capacity; it is time for the clergy to look out. I have also a cassock and stock of sermons to dispose of, dry and fit for use.

SYDNEY SMITH.

336.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 22nd, 1833.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you are all well after the fatigues of London, and enjoying the north as much as I do the west. I can conceive no greater happiness than that of a Minister in such times escaping to his country-seat. The discharged debtor,—the bird escaped from the cage-door, have no feelings of liberty which equal it. Have you any company? For your own sakes, I wish not. You must be sick of the human countenance, and it must be a relief to you to see a cow instead of a christian. We have had here the Morleys and Lady Davy, and many others unknown to you. Our evils have been, want of rain, and scarlet-fever in our village;

where, in three-quarters of a year, we have buried fifteen, instead of one, per annum. You will naturally suppose I have killed all these people by doctoring them; but scarlet-fever awes me, and is above my aim. I leave it to the professional and graduated homicides.

The ——s are with us. Mrs. —— confined to her sofa a close prisoner. I was forced to decline seeing Malthus, who came this way. I am convinced her last accident was entirely owing to his visit.

I am so engaged in the nonsensical details of a country life, that I have hardly looked at a book; the only one I have read with pleasure is Sturt's 'Discoveries in New Holland.' There must be a great degree of felony and larceny in my composition, for I have great curiosity about that country; and if Lord Grey's friendship and kindness had left me anything to desire, I should ask to be Governor of Botany Bay.

SYDNEY SMITH.

337.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Woburn Abbey, Dec. 4th, 1833.

An old and sincere friend feels deeply for your loss, recollecting the ancient kindness of Castle Howard, and the many happy days he has spent there.

It is impossible not to meet with affliction, but it is some comfort to think that many others grieve with our grief, and are thinking of us with deep and honest concern. God bless you, dear Lady Carlisle! I exhort you to firmness and courage, for there are in your mind those foundations on which the best courage is built.

S. S.

338.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Taunton, Dec. 24th, 1833.

My dear John,

Pray send me a word or two respecting Scotland and Scotch friends. Is it true that one of the Scotch Judges is about to resign either life or place? and will Jeffrey succeed him? This will be very agreeable news to me, for I wish to see him in port. We are becoming quiet and careless here. What is your state in Scotland? I begin to hope we shall not have a revolution, though perhaps I am too sanguine.

Read Hamilton's 'America,'—excellent, and yet unjust. Suppose a well-bred man to travel in stage-coaches, and to live at ordinaries here; what would be his estimate of England and Englishmen?

We are living here with open windows, and complaining of the heat. Remember me kindly to Jus and Pus Thompson,* and to Mr. Rutherford. I regret sincerely I am so far from Edinburgh. God bless you, dear John!

SYDNEY SMITH.

339.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

December, 1833.

My dear G.,

The Ministers, you will admit (all Tory as you are), have at least sent you a most respectable man and gentleman as Dean of Lichfield. His style is, that he is a scholar, with much good sense, and with the

* The Edinburgh lawyer and physician of that name were so distinguished by Mr. Sydney Smith.—ED.

heart of a gentleman. He was my next-door neighbour in Yorkshire, and I know him well.

We shall be in town the 18th of February; but if there is any chance of seeing you in town at all, it will be in July, one of my months of residence. Pray give over hunting. Ask Meynell to leave off. He has been pursuing the fox for thirty years. Glory has its limits, like any other pursuit.

I passed an agreeable month in London, finding the town full of my acquaintances and friends. I went to Brighton, which pleased me much; and visited the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lansdowne, at their country places. I admire the Duchess of Bedford for her wit and beauty. How are all your children? How are you?

SYDNEY SMITH.

340.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

No date.

My dear Murray,

Many and sincere thanks for the grouse. I shall be heartily glad if you are returned. The fact is, the Whig Ministry were nearly dissolved before the King put them to death; they were weakened by continual sloughing. They could not have stood a month in the Commons. The King put them out of their misery; in which, I think, he did a very foolish thing.

The meetings in London are generally considered as failures. I was invited to dine with Lord ——. The party was curious: Lady ——, Mrs. F—— L——, Barnes (the Editor of the 'Times'), myself, and the Duke of Wellington. I was ill, and sent an

excuse. Do not imagine I am going to rat. I am a thoroughly honest, and, I will say, liberal person, but have never given way to that puritanical feeling of the Whigs against dining with Tories.

> Tory and Whig in turns shall be my host,
> I taste no politics in boil'd and roast.

S. S.

341.] To THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, May 23rd, 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

Pray make Lord Grey read the enclosed copy of my letter to the Chancellor. There is nobody to take the part of the parish clergy; they are left to be tormented by laws and by bishops, as frogs and rabbits are given up to the experiments of natural philosophers. In a few years your clergy will become mean and fanatical.

Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

342.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, July, 1834.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

The thought was sudden, so was the execution: I saw I was making no progress in London, and I resolved to run the risk of the journey. I performed it with pain, and found on my arrival at my own door my new carriage completely disabled. I called on no one, but went away without beat of drum. I know nothing of public affairs—I have no pleasure in think-

ing of them, and turn my face the other way, deeply regretting the abrupt and unpleasant termination of Lord Grey's political life.

I am making a slow recovery; hardly yet able to walk across the room, nor to put on a christian shoe. On Monday I shall have been ill for a month. Perhaps it is a perquisite of my time of life, to have the gout or some formidable illness. We enter and quit the world in pain! but let us be just however; I find my eyesight much improved by gout, and I am not low-spirited.

Pray, let me hear from you from time to time, as you shall from me. Remember me to the handsome widow with handsome daughters; and believe me, my dear G., yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

343.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 12th, 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

I should be glad to hear a word about the dinner; you must have been in the seventh heaven. I am heartily rejoiced at the great honours Lord Grey has received, and which I am sure will give him great pleasure in retirement.

I have spent a summer of sickness, never having been ten days without some return of gout or ophthalmia; at present I am very well, and laying up the aliments and elements of future illnesses. I shall be in London the 1st of November with Mrs. Sydney, in Weymouth-street, where you paid me those charitable visits; for which, God's blessing be upon you!

I think —— has damaged the Administration from ten to twenty per cent. I wish our friend —— would not speak so much. I really cannot agree with him about reform. I am for no more movements: they are not relished by Canons of St. Paul's. When I say, "no more movements," however, I except the case of the Universities; which, I think, ought to be immediately invaded with Inquirers and Commissioners. They are a crying evil.

I have had a great number of persons coming to Combe Florey. They all profess themselves converts to the beauty of the country.

Terrible work with the new Poor Law! Nobody knows what to do, or which way to go. How did Lord Grey stand all his fatigues? Has Rogers been with you? Who should pay me a visit but P—— B——! His very look turns country into Piccadilly.

SYDNEY SMITH.

344.] To MRS. BARING.

Weymouth-street, Portland-place, 1834.

Dear Mrs. Baring,

I have a favour to ask: could you lend our side such a thing as a Chancellor of the Exchequer? Some of our people are too little,—some too much in love, —some too ill. We will take great care of him, and return him so improved you will hardly know him.

You will be glad to hear my eyes are better—nearly well. Ever sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—What is real piety? What is true attach-

ment to the Church? How are these fine feelings best evinced? The answer is plain: by sending strawberries to a clergyman. Many thanks.

S. S.

345.] To Mrs. Baring.

Combe Florey, October, 1834.

Dear Mrs. Baring,

L—— has just left us. We all think him a very excellent and agreeable man; but wholly ignorant, for the greatest part of the day, of our names and parish, and not very certain of his own.

See what you lose by being a Tory: your son might have been Bishop of Bristol; a very lean and ill-fed piece of preferment (it is true), but a passage to better things. Ever very sincerely yours,

Sydney Smith.

346.] To the Countess Grey.

London, November 19*th*, 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

Nothing can exceed the fury of the Whigs! They mean not only to change everything upon the earth, but to alter the tides, to suspend the principles of gravitation and vegetation, and to tear down the solar system. The Duke's success, as it appears to me, will entirely depend on his imitation of the Whig measures. I am heartily glad Lord Grey is in port. I am (thanks to him) in port too, and have no intentions of resigning St. Paul's. *I* have not resigned. Still the King has used them ill. If he always intended

to turn them out as soon as Lord Spencer died, he should have told Lord Melbourne so, and not have placed him in so awkward a position; at least, as far as circumstances over which he has no control can place an able and high-minded man.

I am better in health, avoiding all fermented liquors, and drinking nothing but London water, with a million insects in every drop. He who drinks a tumbler of London water has literally in his stomach more animated beings than there are men, women, and children on the face of the globe. London is very empty, but by no means disagreeable: I find plenty of friends. Pray be in London early in January. I shall practise as I preach, and be there from January till Easter.

It is supposed that the messenger who is gone to fetch Sir Robert Peel, will not catch him before he is at Pæstum; in the meantime, the Duke of Wellington holds all offices, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, and is to be Bishop of Ely (if Ely dies), till Peel arrives.

SYDNEY SMITH.

347.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date: supposed 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

There departs from Taunton this day my annual quit-rent cheese, and with it my hearty thanks and gratitude for the comfort and independence I have derived from the kindness of Lord Grey. We are all well, and mean to be in town by the 19th of next month. There is a report that we are going to be married, but I know nothing about it. If we are married, and the report proves to be true, I shall ad-

vertise for a daughter; I cannot possibly get on without a daughter;—but I suppose it is only an idle rumour. Mild weather, the windows open, and thirty sorts of flowers blowing in the garden.

They seem to have given up the idea of your resigning. When I came down here, I found everybody sure you were upon the eve of abdication. I wish the Cabinet would do something about the rain,—it is eternal; and as the road to Taunton is sometimes covered with floods, we are cut off from butchers, doctors, tailors, and all who supply the wants of life.

As I know you are a good scholar, you may say to Lord Grey, for me,—

> Precor ut hic annus tibi lætis auspiciis
> Ineat, lætioribus procedat, lætissimis exeat,
> Et sæpius recurrat semper felicior.

S. S.

348.] To Mrs. Holland.

(*Soon after her marriage.*) 1834.

* * * * *

The blessing of God be upon you both, dear children; and be assured that it makes my old-age much happier to have placed my amiable daughter in the hands of so honourable and so amiable a son.

From your affectionate father,

Sydney Smith.

349.] To the Countess Grey.

18, *Stratford-place, Jan.* 14*th*, 1835.

My dear Lady Grey,

I believe the new Ministry are preparing some great

coup de théâtre, and that when the curtain draws up there will be seen, ready prepared,—Abolition of Pluralities, Commutation of Tithes, Provision for the Catholic Clergy, etc. Somebody asked Peel the other day how the elections were going on. Peel said, "I know very little about them, and, in truth, I care little; we have such plans as I think will silence all opposition, or at least such as will conciliate all reasonable men." Do not doubt that he said this.

I was last week on crutches with the gout, and it came into my eye; but by means of colchicum I can now see and walk. Of course I had the best advice. I write to you, not to make you write to me,—for what can you tell me, where you are, but that C——, of C——, is well or ill?—but because I am in London, and you are not. You may say that you are happy out of office, but I have great disbelief on this subject.

SYDNEY SMITH.

350.] To SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

January 15th, 1835.

Dear Horton,*

It is impossible to say what the result of all these changes will be. I do not think there is any chance of the Tories being suffocated at the first moment by a denial of confidence; if the more heated Whigs were to attempt it, the more moderate ones would resist it. If I were forced to give an opinion, I should say Peel's government would last through a session; and a session is, in the present state of politics, an eternity.

* Sir Wilmot Horton was at this time Governor of Ceylon.

But the remaining reforms, rule who may, must go on. The Trojans must put on the armour of the Greeks whom they have defeated.

Never was astonishment equal to that produced by the dismissal of the Whigs. I thought it better at first to ascertain whether the common laws of nature were suspended; and to put this to the test, I sowed a little mustard and cress seed, and waited in breathless anxiety the event. It came up. By little and little I perceived that, as far as the outward world was concerned, the dismissal of Lord Melbourne has not produced much effect.

I met T—— yesterday at Lady Williams's, a sensible and very good-natured man, and so stout that I think there are few wild elephants who would care to meet him in the wood. I am turned a gouty old gentleman, and am afraid I shall not pass a green old-age, but, on the contrary, a blue one; or rather, that I shall be spared the trouble of passing any old-age at all. Poor Malthus! everybody regrets him;—in science and in conduct equally a philosopher, one of the most practically wise men I ever met, shamefully mistaken and unjustly calumniated, and receiving no mark of favour from a Liberal Government, who ought to have interested themselves in the fortunes of such a virtuous martyr to truth.

I hope you will disorient yourself soon. The departure of the wise men from the East seems to have been on a more extensive scale than is generally supposed, for no one of that description seems to have been left behind. Come back to Europe, where only life is worth having, where that excellent man and governor, Lord Clare, is returning, and where so many

friends are waiting to receive you *à bras ouverts*,—among the rest the Berries, whom I may call fully ripe at present, and who may, if your stay is protracted, pass that point of vegetable perfection, and exhibit some faint tendency to decomposition.

The idea lately was, that Lord —— would go to India, but they are afraid his religious scruples would interfere with the prejudices of the Hindoos. This may be so; but surely the moral purity of his life must have excited their admiration. I beg my kind (and an old parson may say) my affectionate regards to Lady Horton.

Yours, my dear Horton, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

351.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

February 4th, 1835.

A few words to dear Lady Grey. Since —— has taken the field, both parties are become more bloody-minded, and a civil war is expected. The arch-Radicals allow a return of two hundred and sixty Tories, and count upon fifteen Stanleians. This was Warburton's statement to me the other day. Tories claim more; but, by the admission of their greatest enemies, they are, you see, the strongest of the four parties in the House of Commons. I missed Howick's speech. He is a very honest and clever man, and a valuable politician.

My daughter, Mrs. Holland, was confined three or four days ago of a little girl, and is doing very well. I am glad it is a girl; all little boys ought to be put to death.

Thank you for the speech. Very good and very honest. I agree with you entirely as to the difficulty of finding anybody in the relics of the Whigs fit to govern the country. —— and ——, who have every other qualification for governing, want that legion of devils in the interior, without whose aid mankind cannot be ruled.

I have no doubt whatever that Sir Robert Peel is sincere in his Church Reform. Bishops nearly equalized,—pluralities, canons, and prebendaries abolished,—tithes commuted,—and residence enforced. A much more severe bill than Whigs could have ventured upon.

Pray excuse my writing to you so often; but I am learning to write clear and straight, and it is necessary I should write a letter every day. I hear you are to be here by the end of the month. If you put it off for a week or two, you will perhaps not be here till the end of the Monarchy.

Your affectionate chaplain,

SYDNEY SMITH.

352.] To MRS. ——.

18, *Stratford-place, Feb. 22nd,* 1835.

Dear Mrs. ——,

Many thanks for your kind attention. I read half a volume last night;—but why dialogue? I thought that dialogue, allegory, and religious persecution were quite given up; and that mankind, in these points at least, had profited by experience.

I will tell you what I think of the authoress when

I have read her, which I will do soon,—not from supposing that you will be impatient for my opinions, but for your books; and yet I should not say this of you, for God has written, in a large hand, benevolence and kindness on your countenance.

Very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

353.] To LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, May 14th, 1835.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope office agrees with you, and that office is likely to continue. I congratulate you sincerely on recovering the Duchy of Lancaster. We are sad Protestants in the West of England, and can on no account put up with the Pope. Johnny is lucky to have got away alive; he was to have come here if he had triumphed. It seems rather a ridiculous position of affairs, when neither of the Secretaries has a seat in Parliament.

You always accuse me of grumbling against my party. As a refutation of that calumny, I send you my declaration of faith. I will take good care you shall never make *me* a bishop; but if all your future Whig bishops would speak out as plainly, little Johns would not be driven away from large counties. Lord Melbourne always thinks that man best qualified for any office, of whom he has seen and known the least. Liberals of the eleventh hour abound! and there are some of the first hour, of whose works in the toil and heat of the day I have no recollection.

I cannot tell you the pleasure Morpeth's success has

given to us here. The servants, who are all Yorkshire, and from the neighbourhood of Castle Howard, are in an ecstasy. It has saved dear Lady Carlisle from a great deal of nervousness and mortification.

Lord Alvanley is equal to Britomart or Amadis de Gaul. I thank him, in the name of the fat men, for the noble stand he has made for circumference and diameter. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Extract from the 'Taunton Courier,' enclosed in the foregoing letter.

To MR. BUNTER.

Sir,

You have done me the honour, in your own name and in that of your brother Requisitionists, to invite me to the meeting holden this day at Taunton. I am really so heartily tired of meetings and speeches that I must be excused; but I agree with you in your main objects.

It appears to me quite impossible that the Irish Church can remain in its present state. Vested interests strictly guarded, and the spiritual wants of the Protestants of the Establishment provided for, the remainder may wisely and justly be applied to the religious education of other sects. I go further; and think that the Catholic Clergy of Ireland should receive a provision from the State equal to that which they are at present compelled to extort from the peasantry of that country. All other measures without this I cannot but consider as insignificant; and it may be as well conceded now, as after years of blood-

shed and contention. This, with time, and a long course of strict impartiality in the Government between Catholic and Protestant, may restore tranquillity to that light, irritable, and ill-used people.

For these reasons I cannot sympathize in the fears which are sincerely felt at this moment by many honest and excellent persons. I believe that Ministers have acted honestly and wisely with respect to the Irish Church; that their intentions to our own Church are friendly and favourable; and that, as far as they have gone, they deserve the support of the public.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

SYDNEY SMITH.

354.] To DR. HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, June, 1835.

My dear Holland,

We shall have the greatest pleasure in receiving you and yours; and if you were twice as numerous, it would be so much the better.

What do you think of this last piece of legislation for boroughs? It was necessary to do a good deal: the question is one of degree. I shall be in town on Tuesday, the 23rd, and, I hope, under better auspices than last year. I have followed your directions, and therefore deserve a better fortune than fell to my lot on that occasion. —— is the Mahomet of rhubarb and magnesia,—the greatest medical impostor I know.

I am suffering from my old complaint, the hay-fever (as it is called). My fear is, perishing by deliquescence; I melt away in nasal and lachrymal profluvia. My remedies are warm pediluvium, cathartics,

topical application of a watery solution of opium to eyes, ears, and the interior of the nostrils. The membrane is so irritable, that light, dust, contradiction, an absurd remark, the sight of a dissenter,—anything, sets me sneezing; and if I begin sneezing at twelve, I don't leave off till two o'clock, and am heard distinctly in Taunton when the wind sets that way,—a distance of six miles. Turn your mind to this little curse. If consumption is too powerful for physicians, at least they should not suffer themselves to be outwitted by such little upstart disorders as the hay-fever.

I am very glad you married my daughter, for I am sure you are both very happy; and I assure you I am proud of my son-in-law.

I did not think ——, with all his nonsense, could have got down to tar-water. I have as much belief in it as I have in holy water; it is the water has done the business, not the tar. They could not induce the sensual peer to drink water, but by mixing it with nonsense, and disguising the simplicity of the receipt. You must have a pitched battle with him about his tar-water, and teach him what he has never learnt, —the rudiments of common sense. Kindest love to dear Saba. Ever your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

355.] To MRS. HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, June 3rd, 1835.

Dearest daughter,

Sixty-four years old today. If H—— and F——, in the estimation of the doctor, are better out of town,

we shall be happy to receive them here before your rural holidays begin; your children are my children.

A fall of wood, greater than any of the other falls, has taken place; the little walnut-tree and the thorn removed, and a complete view up the valley, both from the library and drawing-room windows. Great opposition—the place would be entirely spoiled; and twelve hours after, an admission of immense improvement. You have seen, my dear Saba, such things as these at Combe Florey. We are both well: no events.

I am afraid of war; I go at once into violent opposition to any Ministry who go to war. What a long line are the —— of needy and rapacious villains! I thought old ——'s letter good and affecting.

I have bought two more ponies, so we are strong in pigmy quadrupeds; my three saddle-horses together cost me £43. 10*s.*, all perfect beauties, and warranted sound, wind and limb, and not a kick in them. Shall you ride when you come down? We are never without fires.

We are going through our usual course of jokes and dinners; one advantage of the country is, that a joke once established is good for ever; it is like the stuff which is denominated *everlasting*, and used as pantaloons by careful parents for their children. In London you expect a change of pleasantry; but M. and N. laugh more at my six-years-old jokes than they did when the jokes were in their infancy. Sir Thomas spoke at —— for two hours,—the Jew for one hour; the boys called out "Old clothes!" as he came into the town, and offered to sell him sealing-wax and slippers.

Give my kindest regards to your excellent husband, and believe me always, your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

356.] To Miss ——.

London, July 22nd, 1835.

Lucy, Lucy, my dear child, don't tear your frock; tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius; but write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts; be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest; and then integrity or laceration of frock is of little import.

And Lucy, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know, in the first sum of yours I ever saw, there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do) and you ought, dear Lucy, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle? What would life be without arithmetic, but a scene of horrors?

You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who never understood arithmetic; by the time you return, I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you; therefore I now give you my parting advice. Don't marry anybody who has not a tolerable understanding and a thousand a year, and God bless you, dear child.

SYDNEY SMITH.

357.] To R. SHARPE, ESQ.

Stratford-place, 1835.

My dear Sharpe,

It is impossible to say whether Cæsar Sutton or

Pompey Abercrombie* will get the better; a civil war is expected: on looking into my own mind, I find an utter inability of fighting for either party.

—— is better, and having lost his disease, has also lost his topics of conversation; has no heart to talk about, and is silent from want of suffering.

I have seen the new House of Parliament: the House of Commons is very good, much better than the old one; the Lords' house is shabby. Government are going on vigorously with the Church Bill; it will be an infinitely more savage bill than the Whigs would have ventured to introduce. The Whigs mean to start Abercrombie against the Speaker. All the planets and comets mean to stop, and look on at the first meeting of Parliament. The Radicals allow 260 to the Tories, who claim 290:—from 7 to 5 are given to the Stanley party. Read Inglis's Travels in Ireland. Bold, shrewd, and sensible, he is accused of judging more rapidly than any man in six weeks' time is entitled to do; but then he merely states what he saw. I met him, he seemed like his book. Young Mackintosh is going on with his father's Life. He sent me a tour on the Rhine, by his father; but I thought it differed very little from other tours on the Rhine, and so I think he will not publish it. You will be glad to hear that —— is doing very well: he is civil to the counsel, does not interrupt, and converses with the other judges as if they had the elements of law and sense. India was offered to Sir James Kemp before it was offered to Lord Haytesbury; Kemp refused it on account of a wound in his heel, a vulnerable point (as we know) in heroes. I hear a good account of your cough, and

* In allusion to the contest about the Speaker.

a bad one of your breathing; pray take care of yourself. Rogers might be mistaken for a wrestler at the Olympic games; Luttrell is confined by the leg; Whishaw is waiting to see which side he is to pooh-pooh! I heartily wish, my dear Sharpe, that physicians may do you as much good as they have done me.

SYDNEY SMITH.

You have met, I hear, with an agreeable clergyman: the existence of such a being has been hitherto denied by the naturalists; measure him, and put down on paper what he eats.

358.] To SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

1835.

Dear Horton,

Why do you not come home, as was generally expected you would do? Come soon; life is short: Europe is better than Asia. The battle goes on between Democracy and Aristocracy; I think it will end in a compromise, and that there will be nothing of a revolutionary nature; our quarrels, though important, are not serious enough for that.

Read Mrs. Butler's (Fanny Kemble's) Diary; it is much better than the reviews and papers will allow it to be: what is called vulgarity, is useful and natural contempt for the exclusive and the superfine. Lord Grey has given up public life altogether, and is retired into the country. No book has appeared for a long time more agreeable than the Life of Mackintosh; it is full of important judgments on important men, books, and things.

I have seen Lord Clare: he hardly looks a shade more yellow. The men who have risen lately into more notice are Sir George Grey, Lord Grey's nephew, and Lord Howick; Lord John and Morpeth have done very well; Peel admirably.

The complete —— has returned from Italy a greater bore than ever; he bores on architecture, painting, statuary, and music. Frankland Lewis is filling his station of King of the Paupers extremely well: they have already worked wonders; but of all occupations it must be the most disagreeable. I don't blame the object, but dislike the occupation; the object is justified, because it prevents a much greater destruction of human beings hereafter.

—— will get no credit for his book; it is impossible now to be universal; men of the greatest information and accuracy swarm in the streets,—mineralogists, astronomers, ornithologists, and lousologists; the most minute blunder is immediately detected.

Believe me, my dear Horton, yours sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

359.] To MRS. ——.

Combe Florey, July, 1835.

Many thanks, dear Mrs. ——, for your kindness in thinking of me and my journey after the door was shut; but you have a good heart, and I hope it will be rewarded with that aliment in which the heart delights,—the respectful affection of the wise and just.

I will write to you before I come to Boulogne, and am obliged to you for the commission. I have been

travelling one hundred and fifty miles in my carriage, with a green parrot and the 'Life of Mackintosh.' I shall be much surprised if this book does not become extremely popular. It is full of profound and eloquent remarks on men, books, and events. What more, dear lady, can you wish for in a book?

I found here seven grandchildren, all in a dreadful state of perspiration and screaming. You are in the agonies of change; always *some* pain in leaving! I could say a great deal on that subject, only I am afraid you would quiz me. And, pray, what am I to do for my evening parties in November, if you are not in London? Surely you must have overlooked this when you resolved to stay at Boulogne.

Mr. Whishaw is coming down here on the 8th of August, to stay some days. He is truly happy in the country. What a pleasure it would be if you were here to meet him! But to get human beings together who ought to be together, is a dream.

Keep a little corner in that fine heart of yours for me, however small it may be; a clergyman in your heart will keep all your other notions in good order. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

360.] To MRS. ——.

August 28th, 1835.

Dear Mrs. ——,

Many thanks. The damsel will not take to the water, but we have found another in the house who has long been accustomed to the water, being no other than our laundry-maid. She had some little dread of

a ship, but as I have assured her it is like a tub, she is comforted.*

I think you will like Sir James Mackintosh's Life; it is full of his own thoughts upon men, books, and events, and I derived from it the greatest pleasure. He makes most honourable mention of your mother, whom I only know by one of her productions,—enough to secure my admiration. It is impossible to read Mill's violent attack upon Mackintosh without siding with the accused against the accuser. Can it be generally useful to speak with indecent contempt of a man whom so many men of sense admired, and who is no longer in the land of the living?

I should not scruple to draw upon your good-nature and kindness if I had any occasion to do so; but as to my French journey, the only use you can be of to me is, to be as amiable and agreeable when I see you at Boulogne, as I have found you on this side the water. I can only say a few winged words, and leave you a flying benediction, as I am going by Rouen, and mean to see a great deal in a little time. By the bye, I want to find a good sleeping-place between Rouen and Paris, as I wish to arrive at Paris in the day, time enough to find good quarters.

We have had charming weather; and all who come here, or have been here, have been delighted with our little paradise,—for such it really is; except that there is no serpent, and that we wear clothes. God bless you, dear Mrs. ——! My best and most friendly wishes attend you always.

S. S.

* Mrs. Sydney's maid would not accompany her to France, from fear of the sea.—Ed.

361.] To Mrs. ——.

Combe Florey, Sept. 7th, 1835.

Health to Mrs. ——, and happiness, and agreeable society, carelessness for the future, and enjoyment of the present!

Who can think of your offer now, and before, but with kindness and gratitude? My brother, who loves paradoxes, says, if he saw a man walking into a pit, he would not advise him to turn the other way. My plan is, on the contrary, to advise, to interfere, to remonstrate, at all hazards. I hate cold-blooded people, a tribe to which you have no relation; and the brother who talks this nonsense would not only stop the wanderer, but jump halfway down the pit to save him. We will go by the Lower Road. The consequence of all this beautiful weather will be, our liquefaction in our French expedition.

I send you a list of all the papers written by me in the Edinburgh Review. Catch me, if you can, in any one illiberal sentiment, or in any opinion which I have need to recant; and that, after twenty years' scribbling upon all subjects.

Lord John Russell comes here next week with Lady John. He has behaved prudently, but the thing is not yet over. I am heartily glad at the prospect of agreement. Who, but the idiots of the earth, would fling a country like this into confusion, because a Bill (in its mutilated state a great improvement) is not carried as far, and does not embrace as much, as the best men could wish? Is political happiness so cheap, and political improvement so easy, that the one can be sported with, and the other demanded, in this

style? God bless you, dear Mrs. ——! From your friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

362.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 11*th*, 1835.

My dear Lady Grey,

Your letter gave me great pleasure—the pleasure of being cared about by old and good friends, and the pleasure of seeing that they know I care about them. Lord Grey has met with that reception which every honest and right-minded man felt to be his due. If I had never known him, and lived in the north, I should have come out to wave my bonnet as he passed. He may depend upon it he has played a great part in English history, and that the best part of the English people entertain for him the most profound respect. And now, for the rest of life, let him trifle and lounge, and do everything which may be agreeable to him, and drink as much wine as he dare, and not be too severe in criticizing himself.

We have had Scarlett and Denman here: the former, an old friend of mine; Denman everybody likes.

I don't know whether you have the same joy, but I am heartily glad the fine weather is over; it totally prevented me from taking exercise, and therefore, from being as well as I otherwise should have been. Lord and Lady John Russell came here on Monday. On the 22nd I go to 25, Lower Brook-street, and on the 28th we go to Paris for a month,—Mrs. Sydney, and Mr. and Mrs. Hibbert, and myself. I have not the least wish to see Paris again, but go to show it to

Mrs. Sydney. I think every wife has a right to insist upon seeing Paris. It would give me some pleasure to talk with the King of France for half an hour.

We all (I take it for granted) rejoice at the wise decision of the Government. They would have lost character if they had given up the Bill, and embroiled the country for an object so trifling. O'Connell's letter to the Duke of Wellington is dreadfully scurrilous, but there are in it some distressing truths. The state of America will help the Tories, and diffuse a horror of mobs. . .

I have (heat excepted) spent an agreeable summer with my two daughters and all their families,—seven grandchildren. It will give me great pleasure to hear that Lord Grey and you have been and are well and happy.

SYDNEY SMITH.

363.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Abbeville, Oct. 2nd, 1835.

My dear Lady Holland,

You, who are always good and kind to me, were so obliging as to say I might write to you, and inform you how we got over. Nothing could be worse.

* * * * *

The weather has been horrible, the country is execrable, the travelling is very slow and tedious. Tomorrow we go from this town to Rouen, and shall be in Paris on Wednesday.

There is a family of English people living here who have been here for five years. They stopped to change horses, liked the place, and have been here ever since:

father, mother, two handsome daughters, and some young children. I should think it not unlikely that one of the daughters will make a nuptial alliance with the waiter, or give her hand to the son of the landlord, in order to pay the bill.

I saw Sebastiani at Calais setting off with the dry-nurse of the Duc de Nemours in a *calèche*, which any of your Kensington tradesmen would have disdained to enter. There is a blessed contempt of appearances in France.

We are well, and are going to sit down to a dinner at five francs a head. We are going regularly through the Burgundy wines,—the most pernicious and of course the best: Macon the first day, Chablis the second—both excellent; today Volnay.

S. S.

364.] To Mrs. Holland.

Rouen, Oct. 6th, 1835.

My dearest Child,

—— fell ill in London, and detained us a day or two. At Canterbury, the wheel would not turn round; we slept there, and lost our passage the next day at Dover: this was Wednesday,—a day of mist, fog, and despair. It blew a hurricane all that night, and we were kept awake by thinking of the different fish by which we should be devoured on the following day. I thought I should fall to the lot of some female porpoise, who, mistaking me for a porpoise, but finding me only a parson, would make a dinner of me. We were all up and at the quay by five in the morning. The captain hesitated very much whether he would

embark, and your mother solicited me in pencil notes not to do so; however, we embarked,—the French Ambassador, ourselves, twenty Calais shopkeepers, and a variety of all nations. The passage was tremendous: Hibbert had crossed four times, and the courier twenty; I had crossed three times more, and we none of us ever remember such a passage. I lay along the deck, wrapped in a cloak, shut my eyes, and, as to danger, reflected that it was much more apparent than real; and that, as I had so little life to lose, it was of little consequence whether I was drowned, or died, like a resident clergyman, from indigestion. Your mother was taken out more dead than alive.

We were delighted with the hotel of Dessein, at Calais; eggs, butter, bread, coffee—everything better than in England,—the hotel itself magnificent. We all recovered, and staid there the day; and proceeded to sleep at Montreuil, forty miles, where we were still more improved by a good dinner. The next day, twenty miles further, to Abbeville; from thence, sixty miles the next day to this place, where we found a superb hotel, and are quite delighted with Rouen; the churches far exceed anything in England, in richness of architectural ornament. The old buildings of Rouen are most interesting. All that I refuse to see is, where particular things were done to particular persons;—the square where Joan of Arc was burnt,—the house where Corneille was born. The events I admit to be important; but from long experience, I have found that the square where Joan of Arc was burnt, and the room where Corneille was born, have such a wonderful resemblance to other rooms and squares, that I have ceased to interest myself about them.

Tomorrow we start for Mantes, and the next day we shall be at Paris. Travelling is extremely slow—five miles an hour. I find the people now, as I did before, most delightful; compared to them, we are perfect barbarians. Happy the man whose daughter were half as well bred as the chambermaid at Dessein's, or whose sons were as polished as the waiter! Whatever else you do, insist, when Holland brings you to France, on coming to Rouen; there is nothing in France more worth seeing. Come to Havre, and by steam to Rouen. God bless you, dear child! Give my love to Froggy and Doggy. Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

365.] To MRS. ——.

Hôtel de Londres, Place Vendôme,
Sunday, Oct. 11th, 1835.

Dear Mrs. ——,

* * * * *

At Calais, we were delighted with Dessein's Hotel, and admired the waiter and chambermaid as two of the best-bred people we had ever seen. The next sensation was at Rouen. Nothing (as you know) can be finer;—Beautiful country, ships, trees, churches, antiquities, commerce,—everything which makes life interesting and agreeable. I thank you for your advice, which sent me by the Lower Road to Paris. My general plan in life has been to avoid low roads, and to walk in high places, but from Rouen to Paris is an exception.

The Ambassador lent us his box yesterday, and I heard Rubini and Grisi, Lablache and Tamburini. The

opera, by Bellini, 'I Puritani,' was dreadfully tiresome, and unintelligible in its plan. I hope it is the last opera I shall ever go to.

We are well lodged in an hotel with a bad kitchen. I agree in the common praise of the French living. Light wines, and meat thoroughly subdued by human skill, are more agreeable to me than the barbarian Stonehenge masses of meat with which we feed ourselves. Paris is very full. I look at it with some attention, as I am not sure I may not end my days in it. I suspect the fifth act of life should be in great cities; it is there, in the long death of old-age, that a man most forgets himself and his infirmities; receives the greatest consolation from the attentions of friends, and the greatest diversion from external circumstances.

Pray tell me how often the steamboats go from Boulogne; whether every day, or, if not, what days; and when the tides will best serve, so as to go from harbour to harbour, in the week beginning the twenty-fifth of October. Pray excuse this trouble. I have always compunctions in asking you to do anything useful; it is as if one were to use blonde lace for a napkin, or to drink toast-and-water out of a ruby cup; —a clownish confusion of what is splendid and what is serviceable. Sincerely and respectfully yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

366.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Paris, Oct. 20th, 1835.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am sure the pleasantest thing that you and Lord Grey and Georgina could do, would be to go to Paris

for May and June. It would not cost more than life in London, and would be to you a source of infinite amusement and pleasing recollections. Our excursion here has given Mrs. Sydney the greatest gratification. We have seen the outside of Paris thoroughly. I think Lord and Lady Carlisle both improved in health; they are to stay here the winter.

I have seen Madame de —— once or twice, but I never attempt to speak to her, or to go within six yards of her. I am aware of her abilities, and of the charms of her conversation and manner to those whom it is worth her while to cultivate; but to *us others*, she is, as it were, the Goddess Juno, or some near relation to Jove.

The French are very ugly; I have not seen one pretty French woman. I am a convert to the beauty of Lady ——; her smile is charming. Paris swarms with English. Lord Granville was forced to go up five pair of stairs to find Lord Canterbury. In another garret, equally high, was lodged Lord Fitzgerald. I care very little about dinners; but I acquiesce thoroughly in all that has been said of their science. I shall not easily forget a *matelote* at the Rochers de Cancale, an almond tart at Montreuil, or a *poulet à la Tartare* at Grignon's. These are impressions which no changes in future life can obliterate. I am sure they would have sunk deeply into the mind of Lord Grey; I know nobody more attentive to such matters.

The King's best friends here hardly understand what he is at. I suppose he thinks that, with a free press, nothing could save France from anarchy: perhaps he may be right. I believe him to be a virtuous and excellent man.

We have had bad weather. We leave Paris tomorrow, and shall be in London on the 25th or 26th. Lord William Bentinck is in our hotel, endeavouring to patch up a constitution broken by every variety of climate. I find him a plain, unaffected, sensible man.

Always, dear Lady Grey, with sincere respect and affection, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

367.] To MRS. ——.

Many thanks, dear Mrs. ——, for the Review, which I conclude to be yours, and which I read with pleasure; but I wish you great philosophers would condescend to tell us *what* and *how much* you propose to teach; what the real advantages are which society is likely to reap from education, and whether the dangers which many apprehend are not imaginary. You take all the good for granted, and all the idea of evil as exploded. Whereas, education has many honest enemies; and many honestly doubt and demur, who do not speak out for fear of being assassinated by Benthamites, who might think it, upon the whole, more useful that such men should die than live.

SYDNEY SMITH.

368.] To LORD MURRAY.

Weymouth-street, Portland-place, Nov. 6th, 1835.

No news. All the Ministers meet here on the 12th. John Russell is to make a great splash at Bristol; they began laying the cloth ten days ago. I was

invited, but I have done with agitation. I see Lord John means to spare the House of Lords.

Everybody here is delighted with Mackintosh's Life, and is calling out for more letters and diaries. I think Robert Mackintosh has done it very well, by putting in as little mortar as possible between the layers of stone.

We are all pleased with our Paris excursion. The Liberals, particularly the Flahaults, do not know what to make of the last measures. If they had only been temporary, there would not have been a dissentient voice.

S. S.

369.] To George Philips, Esq.

November 23rd, 1835.

My dear Philips,

I have bought a house in Charles-street, Berkeley-square (lease for fourteen years), for £1400, and £10 per annum ground-rent. It is near the chapel, in John-street, where I used to preach. I was tired of looking out for ready-furnished houses. We are five minutes from the Park, five minutes from you, and ten minutes from Dr. Holland.

All the Ministers are in town, and I meet them almost every day somewhere or another; but hear nothing of importance, and have no wish to hear anything. They are going on with the reformation of the Church; and the Ministers think that the members of the Commission put in by Peel are quite in earnest, and willing to do the thing fairly.

In calling this morning, I met Lady Davy, Mrs. Marcet, and Mrs. Somerville in the same room. I

told them I was the Shepherd Paris, and that I was to give an apple to the wisest. I congratulated Whishaw on coming out of W—— House unmarried. He says he does not know that he is unmarried, but rather thinks he is. Time will show if any one claims him.

I ought to have the gout, having been in the free use of French wines; and as Nature is never slow in paying these sort of debts, I suppose I shall have it.

SYDNEY SMITH.

370.] To MRS. HOLLAND.

December 11th, 1835.

My dearest Child,

Few are the adventures of a Canon travelling gently over good roads to his benefice. In my way to Reading I had, for my companion, the Mayor of Bristol when I preached that sermon in favour of the Catholics. He recognized me, and we did very well together. I was terribly afraid that he would stop at the same inn, and that I should have the delight of his society for the evening; but he (thank God!) stopped at the Crown, as a loyal man, and I, as a rude one, went on to the Bear. Civil waiters, wax candles, and off again the next morning, with my friend and Sir W. W——, a very shrewd, clever, coarse, entertaining man, with whom I skirmished *à l'amiable* all the way to Bath. At Bath, candles still more waxen, and waiters still more profound. Being, since my travels, very much gallicized in my character, I ordered a pint of claret; I found it incomparably the best wine I ever tasted; it disappeared with a rapidity which sur-

prises me even at this distance of time. The next morning, in the coach by eight, with a handsome valetudinarian lady, upon whom the coach produced the same effect as a steam-packet would do. I proposed weak warm brandy and water; she thought, at first, it would produce inflammation of the stomach, but presently requested to have it warm and *not* weak, and she took it to the last drop, as I did the claret. All well here. God bless you, dearest child! Love to Holland.

SYDNEY SMITH.

371.] To SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

December, 1835.

Dear Wilmot Horton,

I have been to Paris with Mrs. Sydney, and Mr. and Mrs. Hibbert. We saw all the cockney sights, and dined at all the usual *restaurants*, and vomited as usual into the channel which divides Albion from Gallia. Rivers are said to run blood after an engagement; the Channel is discoloured, I am sure, in a less elegant and less pernicious way by English tourists going and coming. The King unpopular, beginning to do unwise things, which surprise the moderate Liberals; but the predominant feeling in France is a love of quiet, and a horror of improvements.

The manufactures of England are flourishing beyond example; there is no other distress but agricultural distress. Every hour that the Ministers stay in they are increasing their strength by the patronage which falls in. I think they will last over next session, and beyond that it would be rash to venture a predic-

tion. I agree with them in everything they are doing. I think there never was such an Administration in this country. This, you will say, is the language of a person (or parson) who wants a bishopric; but, *nolo episcopari*. I dread the pomp, trifles, garments, and ruinous expense of the episcopal life; and this is lucky, as I have not the smallest reason for believing that any one has the most remote intention of putting the mitre on my head.

Our friend Frankland Lewis is gaining great and deserved reputation by his administration of the Poor Laws,—one of the best and boldest measures which ever emanated from any Government.

I hope you have read Mackintosh's Life, and that you like it. I think it a delightful book, and such is the judgment of the public. Where are there more important opinions on men, books, and events? They talk of a new edition, and another volume.

—— holds out, but is all claret, gravy, and puff-paste. I don't think there is an ounce of flesh and blood in his composition. Adieu, dear Horton! come back, my love, to my Lady. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

372.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 1*st*, 1836.

My dear Lady Holland,

I send this day my annual cheese, of which I pray your acceptance. I hope it will prove as good as the last.

The papers all say you are going out; but I don't believe a word of it. I am very well, and have no

doubt you are so also; for there is no disguising the fact, that you are really recovering your health. I denied it as long as I could, but it is too evident for discussion. There is no happiness in hard frost; at present there is a thaw.

The purchase of the "*Hole*"* is nearly completed. I shall come up a few days before Mrs. Sydney, to furnish it, and make it ready for her reception. This will probably be in February. I have fallen into the duet life, and it seems to do very well. Mrs. Sydney and I have been reading Beauvilliers' book on Cookery. I find, as I suspected, that garlic is power; not in its despotic shape, but exercised with the greatest discretion.

S. S.

373.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

January 6th, 1836.

My dear Murray,

It seems a long while since we have heard anything about you and yours, in which matters we always take a very affectionate concern. I saw a good deal of the Ministers in the month of November, which I passed (as I always do pass it) in London. I see no reason why they should go out, and I do not in the least believe they are going. I think they have done more for the country than all the Administrations since the Revolution. The Poor-law Bill alone would immortalize them. It is working extremely well.

I see you are destroying the Scotch Church. I

* A house Mr. Smith had purchased in Charles-street, Berkeley-square.

think we are a little more popular in England than we were. Before I form any opinion on Establishments, I should like to know the effects they produce on vegetables. Many of our clergy suppose that if there was no Church of England, cucumbers and celery would not grow; that mustard and cress could not be raised. If Establishments are connected so much with the great laws of nature, this makes all the difference; but I cannot believe it.

God bless you, dear Murray!

SYDNEY SMITH.

374.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Jan. 11th, 1836.

My dear Philips,

I hope you have escaped gout this winter; it is in vain to hope you have not deserved it. I have had none, and deserve none.

I have no doubt but that this Corporation Bill will produce excellent effects after the first year or two. The destruction of four or five hundred jobbing monopolies must carry with it very important improvements. There are some excellent passages in O'Connell's last letter to Burdett, where he praises the justice and impartiality of this Government in the administration of Irish affairs.

Whishaw retires from his office, and is to live between the two Romillys, or, as they call them, Romulus and Remus; I am sincerely glad of this arrangement. I sent you yesterday, through George, a printed list of my articles in the Edinburgh Review; they may make you laugh on a rainy day.

The bargain for my house is nearly finished. The lawyers discovered some flaw in the title about the time of the Norman Conquest; but, thinking the parties must have disappeared in the quarrels of York and Lancaster, I waived the objection. Not having your cheerfulness, the country *ennuies* me at this season of the year; and I have a large house and no children in it. I have not the slightest belief in the going out of the Ministry; I should as soon think of Drummond's white light going out.

W—— left behind him £100,000, with the following laconic account how he had acquired it by different diseases:—"Aurum catharticum, £20,000; aurum diureticum, £10,000; aurum podagrosum, £30,000; aurum apoplecticum, £20,000; aurum senile et nervorum, £10,000." But for the truth of this anecdote I vouch not.

I think we must adopt a daughter.

SYDNEY SMITH.

375.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Feb. 1st, 1836.

My dear Lady Grey,

I write a line to say that my tributary cheese is only waiting in Somersetshire, because you are waiting in Northumberland; and it will come to town to be eaten, as soon as it is aware that you are there to eat it. I hope that Lord Grey and you are well; no easy thing, seeing that there are about fifteen hundred diseases to which man is subject.

Without having thought much about them (and, as I have no part to play, I am not bound to think about

them), I like all the Whigs have done. I only wish them to bear in mind, that the consequences of giving so much power to the people have not yet been tried at a period of bad harvest and checked manufactures. The prosperity of the country during all these changes has been without example.

Mrs. Sydney and I have been leading a Darby-and-Joan life for these last two months, without children. This kind of life might have done very well for Adam and Eve in Paradise, where the weather was fine, and the beasts as numerous as in the Zoological Gardens, and the plants equal to anything in the gardens about London; but I like a greater variety.

Mackintosh kept all his letters. He had a bundle of mine, which his son returned to me. I found a letter written thirty-five years ago, giving an account of my first introduction to Lord and Lady Holland. I sent it to Lady Holland, who was much amused by it. Your grateful and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I had no idea that, in offering my humble caseous tribute every year, I should minister in so great a degree to my own glory. I bought the other day some Cheshire cheese at Cullam's, in Bond-street, desiring him to send it to Mr. Sydney Smith's. He smiled, and said, "Sir, your name is very familiar to me." "No," I replied, "Mr. Cullam, I am not Sir Sidney Smith, but Mr. Sydney Smith." "I am perfectly aware of it," he said; "I know whom I am addressing; I have often heard of the cheeses you send to Lord Grey." So you see there is no escaping from fame.

376.] To Sir Wilmot Horton, Bart.

Combe Florey, Feb. 8th, 1836.

Dear Wilmot Horton,

I agree with the Whigs in all they are doing, and have only that mistrust which belongs to the subject of politics, and is inseparable from it. I see no probability of the Tories returning for any time to power. Public opinion is increasing in favour of the Whigs, who are, in my opinion, acting wisely, though boldly; nor do I see any great mistake they have committed.

I have bought a small house in Charles-street, Berkeley-square,—tired of taking a furnished house every year. I am going slowly down the hill of life. One evil in old-age is, that as your time is come, you think every little illness is the beginning of the end. When a man expects to be arrested, every knock at the door is an alarm.

The welfare of the country is unexampled. Politicians should not forget that they have never tried the chances of bad harvests with checked manufactures.

Tufnell is become a great man, loaded with places and honours. Hay is in rather an awkward position, —a Tory in the midst of Whigs. I see him from time to time, and always like his society. I hear you have banished yourself till the year 1840. You will find me at that period at St. Paul's, against the wall.

I think the Whigs have sent a good and safe man to ——. The only objection to him is, he looks so confoundedly melancholy, that in any public calamity, he will scatter despair and impede the active virtues.

I shall be very glad to see you and yours.

Sydney Smith.

377.] To Sir George Philips.

February 28th, 1836.

My dear Philips,

You say I have many comic ideas rising in my mind; this may be true; but the champagne bottle is no better for holding the champagne. Don't you remember the old story of Carlin, the French harlequin? It settles these questions. I don't mean to say I am prone to melancholy; but I acknowledge my weakness enough to confess that I want the aid of society, and dislike a solitary life.

Thomas Brown was an intimate friend of mine, and used to dine with me regularly every Sunday in Edinburgh. He was a Lake poet, a profound metaphysician, and one of the most virtuous men that ever lived. As a metaphysician, Dugald Stewart was a humbug to him. Brown had real talents for the thing. You must recognize, in reading Brown, many of those arguments with which I have so often reduced you to silence in metaphysical discussions. Your discovery of Brown is amusing. Go on! You will detect Dryden if you persevere; bring to light John Milton, and drag William Shakspeare from his ill-deserved obscurity!

The Whigs seem to me stronger than ever; I agree in all their measures. I have no doubt about Irish Municipalities.

Sydney Smith.

378.] To Mrs. Murchison.

No date.

Dear Madam,

I am not formally, but *really* obliged to you for this

sketch of Grattan. It is so well expressed, that I suspect it to be your own.

Mrs. Sydney is very unwell; and I am at St. Paul's, going and coming, all the morning. As soon as I am free, and she is well, we will leave our cards at your door, if you will not let us in. I say cards, but *I* shall leave a specimen,—strontian, or greywacke, or something indicative of my respect for Geology and you. Very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

379.] To MRS. ——.

July, 1836.

Dear Mrs. ——,

I shall have great pleasure in calling for you to go to Mrs. Charles Buller, on Wednesday. Mrs. Sydney's arm is rather better, many thanks for the inquiry.

Very high and very low temperature extinguishes all human sympathy and relations. It is impossible to feel affection beyond 78°, or below 20° of Fahrenheit; human nature is too solid or too liquid beyond these limits. Man only lives to shiver or to perspire. God send that the glass may fall, and restore me to my regard for you, which in the temperate zone is invariable.

SYDNEY SMITH.

380.] To SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, July 30th, 1836.

My dear Philips,

I had always heard that Buxton was the worst place in the world for gouty people, and I think it has proved

itself so in your instance. What you call throwing out the gout, is all nonsense. You had the gout a little; after a certain time it would have disappeared; but you go to Buxton, it becomes worse, and then you and Dr. —— say, unphilosophically, that the gout was in you before, and has been thrown out. I should think better of Dr. —— if he had not been discovered by ——. The land *he* discovers is very apt to be a fog-bank.

I have been, as you see, fighting with bishops at Ephesus. We have procured a suspension of the Bill; but the Whigs have committed so great an error, in their subserviency to bishops, that I am afraid they must persevere. The lower clergy have been scandalously neglected by the Whig Government. But enough of this nonsense. I think the Administration will have a good majority on the Appropriation Clause, and I see no prospect of a change.

We stayed at Windsor a day. All that is worth seeing is seen in an hour: the outside of the Castle,—the view from the terrace,—and two or three state-rooms. We were unlucky enough to have particular introductions, and suffered as is usual on such occasions.

We are expecting some company, but the idea of filling a country house with pleasant people is a dream; it all ends in excuses and disappointments, and nobody comes but the parson of the parish. It will give us great pleasure, my dear Philips, to hear you are better. Pray say it as soon as you can say so, and in the meantime believe me, with sincere affection, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

381.] To Mrs. ——.

Combe Florey, Taunton, Sept. 15th, 1836.

My dear Mrs. ——

I am afraid of delaying a day for fear you should be gone. I cannot imitate the lofty flights of Jeffrey, but I am, without metaphors, very sorry to lose the pleasures of your society.

We have a pleasant party staying here. I will write to you if I remain alive. If I am removed (as is the common fate of Canons) by an indigestion, retain some good-natured recollections of an ecclesiastic who knows your value. God bless you,

Sydney Smith.

382.] To Sir W. Horton, Bart.

Combe Florey, Sept., 1836.

My dear Wilmot Horton,

The same balance of parties remains, with a slight preponderance to the popular side. Peel plays his game with consummate skill and prudence, and I am inclined to say the same of Lord Lyndhurst and the House of Lords. The effect of their different measures upon the opinions of the country cannot be well measured, because the prosperity is so great that everybody is satisfied with almost any measure and any government. In the meantime the Whigs are carrying many measures, any one of which in the old system of things would have immortalized any Administration. Think of Tithes, Poor Law, and the Slave Trade: did you ever hope to see such things accom-

plished? John Russell, Sir George Grey, and Howick are the persons who have most risen in the world. I shall be very glad to see you and Lady Wilmot again in '38. I keep my health, and will try to keep it. Remember me, and let us meet as old friends when you return.

SYDNEY SMITH.

383.] To LADY ASHBURTON.

My dear Lady Ashburton,

On one day of the year, the Canons of St. Paul's divide a little money—an inadequate recompense for all the troubles and anxieties they undergo. This day is, unfortunately for me, that on which you have asked me (the 25th of March), when we all dine together, endeavouring to forget for a few moments, by the aid of meat and wine, the sorrows and persecutions of the Church. I am sure Lord Ashburton and yourself, and your son Francis, feel for us as you ought to do. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

384.] To LADY ASHBURTON.

[With a Print.]

Dear Lady Ashburton,

Miss Mildmay told me yesterday that you had been looking about for a print of the Rev. Sydney Smith. Here he is,—pray accept him. I said to the artist, "Whatever you do, preserve the orthodox look."

Ever truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH

385.] To Colonel Fox.

October, 1836.

My dear Charles,

If you have ever paid any attention to the habits of animals, you will know that donkeys are remarkably cunning in opening gates. The way to stop them is to have two latches instead of one: a human being has two hands, and lifts up both latches at once; a donkey has only one nose, and latch *a* drops, as he quits it to lift up latch *b*. Bobus and I had the grand luck to see little Aunty engaged intensely with this problem. She was taking a walk, and was arrested by a gate with this formidable difficulty: the donkeys were looking on to await the issue. Aunty lifted up the first latch with the most perfect success, but found herself opposed by a second; flushed with victory, she quitted the first latch and rushed at the second: her success was equal, till in the meantime the first dropped. She tried this two or three times, and, to her utter astonishment, with the same results; the donkeys brayed, and Aunty was walking away in great dejection, till Bobus and I recalled her with loud laughter, showed her that she had two hands, and roused her to vindicate her superiority over the donkeys. I mention this to you to request that you will make no allusion to this animal, as she is remarkably touchy on the subject, and also that you will not mention it to Lady Mary. I wish you would both come here next year.

Always yours, my dear Charles, very sincerely,

Sydney Smith.

386.] To Lady Ashburton.

33, *Charles-street, Nov. 10th*, 1836.

Health to you, my dear Lady Ashburton! May your daughters marry the wise and the good! And may your sons support our admirable Constitution in Church and State! May Lord Ashburton use in future steady horses and skilful coachmen; and may the friendship between you and Lady—— flame over the moral world, and shame, by its steady light, the fleeting and flickering passions of the human race!

I must stay here all this month, or, at least, till the 29th, or the week after; and which of these two weeks, I will let you know in two or three days. As to parties, I am the most comfortable guest in the world. I have not the slightest objection to meet everybody, nor the slightest wish to see anybody except you and yours.

Mr. and Mrs. —— dined at —— yesterday. I sat next to Mr. ——. His voice faltered, and he looked pale: I did all I could to encourage him; made him take quantities of sherry. Mrs. —— also looked very unhappy, and I had no doubt took the H. H. draught when she went home. You know, perhaps, that there is a particular draught which the London apothecaries give to persons who have been frightened at H. H. They will both tell you that they were not at all frightened, but don't believe them; I have seen so much of the disorder, that I am never mistaken. However, don't let me make you uneasy; it generally goes off after a day or two, and rarely does any permanent injury to the constitution. Ever yours very truly,

Sydney Smith.

387.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

33, *Charles-street, Nov.* 25*th*, 1836.

My dear Murray,

I leave London on the 1st of December for Combe Florey, and should have done so before, but we, the Cathedrals, are fighting the Bishops; and as I am ringleader, I have been forced to remain. I observe with pleasure the rising spirit of the Cathedrals, which have been abominably ill-used.

I see nothing as yet which is to disturb the Whigs. Public opinion is decidedly in their favour. The only two faults they have committed are, meddling too much in the private concerns of other nations, and John Russell's passion for Bishops.

It is, I believe, settled that Parliament is to meet very early this year,—I should say, the middle of January,—a very wise measure, if it abridge the duration of the summer session; but the question is, if they will not go on legislating till stinks and sunbeams drive them out of London.

SYDNEY SMITH.

388.] To SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 22*nd*, 1836.

Dear Sir George,

I stayed a day or two at Lord Ashburton's in my way down. To be in a Tory house is like being in another planet. I don't believe a word about the Whigs going out; why should they?

Give my love to Julia. The weather is beautiful; but, as Noodle says (with his eyes beaming with de-

light), "We shall suffer for this, Sir, by-and-by." We are going on with our war against the Bishops, and I shall write a pamphlet upon it, which neither you nor George will read, but Julia will, I think; I should like to reason the matter with her.

I have read 'Astoria' with great pleasure; it is a book to put in your library, as an entertaining, well written—*very* well written—account of savage life, on a most extensive scale. Ellice, who has just come from America, says Mr. Astor is worth £5,000,000 sterling; but Baring does not believe it, or is jealous perhaps.

* * * * *

I have had no gout, nor any symptom of it: by eating little, and drinking only water, I keep body and mind in a serene state, and spare the great toe. Looking back at my past life, I find that all my miseries of body and mind have proceeded from indigestion. Young people in early life should be thoroughly taught the moral, intellectual, and physical evils of indigestion. Love to all. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

389.] *From the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.*

Cleveland-square, Jan. 14th, 1837.

My dear Sir,

The letter to Archdeacon Singleton, for which I have to thank the author, did not require the printed name upon the title-page. The lively talent, sound argument, and genuine humour of the fifty pages which have so much interested me, could have been derived from no pen but one. You have cut it some-

what sharply, but, I believe, not more so than was requisite to give it any useful effect. I am sanguine enough to hope good from it, though I am surprised at myself for any such feelings in times which seem to suggest fear only.

Ever, my dear Sir, in times good or bad, very truly yours,

THOMAS GRENVILLE.

390.] *From the late Archdeacon Singleton.*

Alnwick Castle, Feb. 3rd, 1837.

My dear Sir,

You may suppose that I have long since read your letter with the greatest interest and admiration; but I would not write to you till I could learn how it would make its way with such persons and parties as came under my cognizance. The result of my inquiries has been most satisfactory. It sells in country book-shops, where the question was never known or considered, till you gave life and spirit, as well as argument, to the discussion. High Tories indeed regret the exposure of the Bishops, but in the same breath admit the justice and necessity of it; whilst the Whigs, being now compelled to repudiate the errors of the Commission, have left it powerless, and, if we believe the 'Times,' almost a "caput mortuum."

That a serious impression has been made there can be no doubt; and forgive me if I say that *you*, who have done so much, may yet do more. Could you not see Lord —— privately and in confidence, before the 16th of February (for which day notice for his motion on this subject has been given), and urge upon

him such an alteration and increase of the Commission, as, in the spirit of justice and impartiality, may effect such a reform as will propitiate the public without violating the honest feelings, and much less the oaths and consciences, of the clergy? There never has been, and there never will be again, so fair and fit an opportunity for practical amendment. The profession is ready and expectant. The public, calm, and perhaps indifferent. There is neither impatience within, nor pressure from without. If this opportunity of correcting abuses and modifying anomalies be now lost, it will occur no more in our generation.

Frankly, it seems to me that *you* have a chance of more effectually serving and saving the Church of England than any individual has ever enjoyed.

I remain, my dear Sir, ever yours, with esteem and regard,

TH. S. SINGLETON.

391.] TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

April 3rd, 1837.

My dear John,

At eleven o'clock in the morning, some years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury called upon a friend of mine (my informant) and said, "I am going to the King (George III.) to meet Perceval, who wants to make Mansell Bishop of Bristol. I have advised the King not to assent to it, and he is thoroughly determined it shall not be. I will call in an hour or two, and tell you what has passed." Canterbury did not return till eleven at night. "Quite in vain," he said; "Perceval has beaten us all; he tendered his imme-

diate resignation.—'If he were not considered to be a fit person for recommending the dignitaries of the Church, he was not a fit person to be at the head of the Treasury.' After a conflict carried on all day, we were forced to yield."

Such a conflict, carried on once, and ending with victory, never need be repeated.

I know not, by alluding to the chess-board, whether you mean the charges which —— might make against me, or against liberal men in general. I defy —— to quote a single passage of my writing contrary to the doctrines of the Church of England; for I have always avoided speculative, and preached practical, religion. I defy him to mention a single action in my life which he can call immoral. The only thing he could charge me with, would be high spirits, and much innocent nonsense. I am distinguished as a preacher, and sedulous as a parochial clergyman. His real charge is, that I am a high-spirited, honest, uncompromising man, whom all the bench of Bishops could not turn, and who would set them all at defiance upon great and vital questions. This is the reason why (as far as depends upon others) I am not a bishop; but I am thoroughly sincere in saying I would not take any bishopric whatever, and to this I pledge my honour and character as a gentleman. But, had I been a bishop, you would have seen me, on a late occasion, charging —— and —— with a gallantry which would have warmed your heart's blood, and made Melbourne rub the skin off his hands.

Pretended heterodoxy is the plea with which the Bishops endeavoured to keep off the bench every man of spirit and independence, and to terrify *you* into the

appointment of feeble men, who will be sure to desert you (as all your bishops have lately and shamefully done) in a moment of peril. When was there greater clamour excited than by the appointment of ——, or when were there stronger charges of heterodoxy? Lord Grey disregarded all this, and they are forgotten.

* * * * *

Believe me to be, dear John, sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Make Edward Stanley and Caldwell, a friend of Lord Lansdowne's and mine, bishops; both unexceptionable men.

392.] TO MASTER HUMPHREY MILDMAY.

April 30th, 1837.

I am very sorry to hear you have been so ill. I have inquired about you every day, till I heard you were better. Mr. Travers is a very skilful surgeon, and I have no doubt you will soon be well. In the Trojan War, the Greek surgeons used cheese and wine for their ointments, and in Henry the Eighth's time cobblers' wax and rust of iron were the ingredients; so, you see, it is some advantage to live in Berkeley-square, in the year 1837.

I am going to Holland, and I will write to you from thence to tell you all I have seen, and you will take care to read my letter to Mr. Travers. In the meantime, my dear little Humphrey, I wish you most heartily a speedy recovery, and God bless you!

S. S.

393.] To the Countess Grey.

The Hague, Friday, May 12th, 1837.

Dear Lady Grey,

Never come into Holland. If Lord Grey solicits you to do so, let him solicit in vain. The roads all paved—inns dirty, and dearer than the dearest in England—country frightful beyond all belief; no trees but willows—no fuel but turf; all the people uglier than ——.

I have had a slight fit of the gout, a warning which shall bring me back sooner than I intended; because it is a question put to me by my constitution, "What business has such an ancient gentleman as you to be making tours, and to be putting yourself out of your ordinary method of living?" I have patched myself up for the present, and am going tomorrow to Amsterdam; I hope to be at Brussels on my way back (either home or to the Rhine, as I feel myself) on Wednesday, the 17th. I find about one quarter of the things worth seeing which are said to be so. For instance, at the Hague (whence I write) there is nothing which need detain an Englishman (who has seen everything in his own country) three hours, and I was advised to stay there three days. The best thing in Holland is the bread—the worst thing the water. A Dutch baker (*brood-bakker*) would make his fortune in London.

Madame Falk has lately had a paralytic stroke, but is recovered. Falk is ill, I believe, with the gout, and could not see me.

My journey will confirm me in the immense superiority of England over the rest of the world; and

Lord Grey and you are the best people in it, and I have a great affection for you both.

S. S.

394.] To Sir George Philips.

Brussels, May 20th, 1837.

My dear Philips,

A detestable country all the way from Calais to Amsterdam. Fine cities—admirable architects, far exceeding us, both in their old and new buildings—good bakers—very ugly—stink of tobacco—horses all fat—soldiers little—inns dirty, and very expensive;—better modern painters than we are.

I went to the Belgic Parliament. There was a pound short in the public accounts, and they were speaking about it. Our friend Van de Weyer has been very hospitable and civil to us. He sails for England today, and there is no idea of his taking office. He prefers the English embassy to any other situation, and I am very glad of it. I like his mother,—a very good-hearted, amiable old lady.

The finest city I have seen is Amsterdam; I was much struck with its commercial grandeur. The only city I could live in, of all I have seen, is the city of Brussels. All the great cities of Flanders are underpeopled.

We dined yesterday with Sir Hamilton Seymour; a dinner which consisted of all the accidental arrivals at Brussels, and went off well enough. He seems good-natured and obliging, and the female ambassador is pretty.

Sydney Smith.

395.] To Mrs. Murchison.

June 8th, 1837.

Engaged, my dear Madam, to Sir George Philips, or should have been too happy; will come in the evening, if possible.

I am surprised that an archbishop, living in an alluvial country, should be at your table. Are there no bishops among the Silurian rocks?

Ever yours,

Sydney Smith.

396.] To Miss Berry.

Combe Florey, July 31st, 1837.

Are you well? that is the great point. When do you mean to come and pay us a visit? The general rumour of the times is, that you are tired to death of the country, and that nothing will ever induce you to try it again; that you bought a rake, and attempted to rake the flower-beds, and did it so badly that you pulled up all the flowers. It is impossible, as they say also, to get into the Lindsay the smallest acquaintance with the vegetable world; and that, if it were not for the interference of friends, she would order the roses to be boiled for dinner, and gather a cauliflower as a nosegay.

Your friends the John Russells and Labouchere are here, talking of the sweet and sacred cause of liberty. I am getting innocent as fast as I can, and have already begun to dose my parishioners, which,

as I do not shoot or hunt, is my only rural amusement.

Seriously speaking, my dear Miss Berry, you and Agnes and the Lindsay owe us a visit, and in your heart you cannot deny it. Remember me to Gulielma, your neighbour. Accept my benediction and affection.

SYDNEY SMITH.

397.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Aug. 15th, 1837.

My dear Lady Holland,

The sacred cause of sweet liberty has suffered grievously here. There is a tremendous reaction. All our Whig candidates are disgraced, and despotism is the order of the day. Do you think the Whigs will go on? The country is really in a worse state than before, because parties are still more finely balanced than before the dissolution. The topics urged against the Ministry (most foolishly and unjustly, but successfully) are O'Connell, the Church, and Poor Laws. Why don't you get some of your friends to put out a splendid and slashing defence?

I hope you and Lord Holland are in fair preservation. Lord and Lady John Russell were here, with a beautiful and well-disciplined child. The children of people of rank are generally much better behaved than other children. The parents of the former do not excel the parents of the latter in the same proportion, if they excel them at all.

Among our guests was Senior of Kensington, whose

conversation is always agreeable to me. He is fond of reasoning on important subjects, and reasons calmly, clearly, and convincingly.

We expect Saba and Dr. Holland the end of this or the beginning of next month. I am in great hopes we shall have some cases; I am keeping three or four simmering for him. It is enough to break one's heart to see him in the country; and that I should be his comforter in such a calamity is droll enough!

Yours, dear Lady Holland, very affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I am delighted that you like my pamphlet; I tried all I could not to write it, but John Russell would make me do so, by refusing the fair terms I offered.

398.] To ARTHUR KINGLAKE, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Sept. 30th, 1837.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged by the present of your brother's book. I am convinced digestion is the great secret of life; and that character, talents, virtues, and qualities are powerfully affected by beef, mutton, pie-crust, and rich soups. I have often thought I could feed or starve men into many virtues and vices, and affect them more powerfully with my instruments of cookery than Timotheus could do formerly with his lyre. Ever yours, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

399.] To Mrs. ——.

November 9th, 1837.

Ah, dear Lady! is it you? Do I see again your handwriting? and when shall I see yourself? (as the Irish say). You may depend upon it, all lives out of London are mistakes, more or less grievous;—but mistakes.

I am alone in London, without Mrs. Smith, upon duty at St. Paul's. London, however, is full, from one of these eternal dissolutions and re-assemblage of Parliaments, with which these latter days have abounded. I wish you were back again: nobody is so agreeable, so frank, so loyal, so good-hearted. I do not think I have made any new female friends since I saw you, but have been faithful to you. But I love excellence of all kinds, and seek and cherish it.

The Whigs will remain in; they are in no present danger. Did you read my pamphlet against the Bishops, and how did you like it?

I have not seen your friend Jeffrey for these two years. He did not come to town last year. I hear with the greatest pleasure of his fame as a judge.

I am going back to Combe Florey the end of the month, to remain till the beginning of March; and then in London for some months, where I sincerely hope to see you. To see you again will be like the resurrection of flowers in the spring: the bitterness of solitude, I shall say, is past.

God bless you, dear Mrs. ——!

Sydney Smith.

401.] To his Excellency M. Van de Weyer.

33, *Charles-street, Nov. 27th*, 1837.

My dear Sir,

The evils of Combe Florey are its distance (150 miles), the badness of the season, the dulness and stupidity of a country parsonage in the winter. The goods of Combe Florey are, that our house is very warm and comfortable, and that Mr. and Mrs. Hibbert will be there on the 15th of December; that you can go nowhere where you are more valued, and that we shall be heartily glad to see you. Now take your choice, and tell me what your choice is; and let me know what I owe you for some charming wine; and believe me, yours sincerely,

Sydney Smith.

402.] To the Countess Grey.

1838.

Dear Lady Grey,

* * * * *

I suppose you do not mean to be in town till after Easter. I shall be there the middle of next month. I was in town all November. The general notion was, that the Whigs were weakened; at the same time it is not easy to see how the ill temper of the Radicals will get them out. The Radicals will never dare to vote with the Tories, and on all Radical questions the Tories will vote with the Government. I see, by the report of the Church Commissioners for November last, that all the points for which the Cathedrals contended are given up. This is very handsome on the

part of the Commissioners; and their reform, whether wise or not, will at least be just.

I hope Lord Grey continues quite well; but quite well, I find, at sixty-seven, means about twelve or fourteen distinct ailments; weak eyes, a violent pain in the ankle, stomach slightly disordered, etc.

I have had a long correspondence with Lord John Russell about shutting St. Paul's, which I have published, and would send you if it were a subject of any interest. Joseph Hume wants to make himself popular with the Middlesex electors; Lord John is afraid of Joseph Hume: hence all the correspondence.

I send you a list of my papers in the Edinburgh Review. If you keep that journal, some of them may amuse you when you are out of spirits.

Ever affectionately yours,

S. S.

403.] To R. Monckton Milnes, Esq.

June 30th, 1838.

My dear Sir,

If you want to get a place for a relation, you must not delay it till he is born, but make an application for him *in utero*, about the fifth or sixth month. The same with any smaller accommodation.

You ask for tickets on Wednesday, to go to St. Paul's on Thursday, my first promise dating 1836! I would however have done my possible, but your letter did not arrive till Saturday (*paulo post*). The fact is, I have been wandering about the coast, for Mrs. Sydney's health; and am taken by the Preventive

Service for a brandy merchant, waiting an opportunity of running goods on a large scale.

I wish you many long and hot dinners with lords and ladies, wits and poets; and am always truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

404.] To LADY DAVY.

July 7th, 1838.

Dear Lady Davy,

Common-place, delivered in a boisterous manner, three miles off; and bad, tedious music. If you choose to expose yourself to this in cold blood, it becomes my duty to afford you the means of doing so; for which purpose I enclose, with my affectionate benediction, the order to the "virgins."

Pray excuse me from dining just now. I am possessed by a legion of devils. Accustomed to a hot climate, they are very active in warm weather. Ever your's,

SYDNEY SMITH.

405.] To MISS G. HARCOURT.

Charles-street, 1838.

My dear Georgina,

You see how desirous I am to do what you bid me. In general, nothing is so foolish as to recommend a medicine. If I am doing a foolish thing, you are not the first young lady who has driven an old gentleman to this line of action.

That loose and disorderly young man, E—— H——, has mistaken my wishes for my powers, and has told

you that I proposed to do, what I only said I should be most happy to do. I have overstayed my time so much here, that I *must* hasten home, and feed my starving flock. I should have left London before, but how could I do so, in the pains and perils of the Church, which I have been defending at all moral hazards? Young tells me that nothing will induce the Archbishop to read my pamphlets, or to allow you to read them.

The summer and the country, dear Georgina, have no charms for me. I look forward anxiously to the return of bad weather, coal fires, and good society in a crowded city. I have no relish for the country; it is a kind of healthy grave. I am afraid you are not exempt from the delusions of flowers, green turf, and birds; they all afford slight gratification, but not worth an hour of rational conversation: and rational conversation in sufficient quantities is only to be had from the congregation of a million of people in one spot. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

406.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

About September, 1838.

My dear Philips,

You will be glad to hear that I have had a fit of the gout, but I cannot flatter you with its being anything very considerable. The Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay are here, and go tomorrow to Torquay. I have by this post had a letter from John Murray, who seems to rejoice in his Highland castle.

I have just written a pamphlet against Ballot, and

shall publish it with my name at the proper time. I have done it to employ my leisure. No politics in it, but a *bonâ fide* discussion. I am an anti-ballotist. It will be carried, however, write I never so wisely.

Lord Valletort possessed of Mount Edgecumbe, and bent double with rheumatism! there is a balance in human conditions! Charles Wynne is a truly good man. Pray remember me very kindly to Lushington, and beg he will come, with all his family, Professor and all, to Combe Florey. The curses of Glasgow are, itch, punch, cotton, and metaphysics. I hope Mr. Lushington will discourage classical learning as much as he can.

Nickleby is very good. I stood out against Mr. Dickens as long as I could, but he has conquered me.

Get, and read, Macaulay's Papers upon the Indian Courts and Indian Education. They are admirable for their talent and their honesty. We see why he was hated in India, and how honourable to him that hatred is. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

407.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, September, 1838.

Dear Lady Carlisle,

I see by the papers that you are going abroad, which is all wrong; but pray tell me how you and Lord Carlisle do, before you embark, and when you come back.

We have had a great succession here of literary ladies. The Berrys are gone to Torquay, which they pronounce to be the most beautiful place in England,

or out of it. They stayed some time with us, and were agreeable and good-natured. Then came ——, who talked to me a good deal about war and cannons. I thought him agreeable, but am advised to look him over again when I return to London. Luttrell and Mrs. Marcet are here now. —— is staying here, whom I have always considered as the very type of Lovelace in 'Clarissa Harlowe.' It is impossible, you know, to read an interesting book, and not to clothe the characters in the flesh and blood of living people. He is Lovelace; and who do you think is my imaginary Clarissa? A certain lady who has been at Castle Howard, whom, on account of her purity, I dare not name, sojourning in —— Street, and an admirer of yours, and a friend of mine. Who can it be?

I have written the pamphlet you ordered upon the Ballot; and as you love notoriety, I mean to dedicate it to you, with the most fulsome praise: virtues—talents—grace—elegance—illustrious ancestors—British feeling—mother of Morpeth—humble servant, etc.

Your sincere and obliged friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

408.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, September, 1838.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you are all well and safe at Howick. I have never stirred an inch from this place since I came from town,—six weeks since: an incredible time to remain

at one place. This absence of locomotion has however been somewhat secured by a fit of the gout, from which I am just recovered; and which, under the old *régime*, and before the reign of colchicum, would have laid me up for ten weeks instead of ten days. I know you will quote against me Sir Oracle Hammick; but to him I oppose Sir Oracles Halford, Holland, Chambers, and Warren.

Have you, or has Lord Grey, been among the wise men at Newcastle? Headlam asked me to go; but, though I can endure small follies and absurdities, the nonsense of these meetings is too intense for my advanced years and delicate frame. One of the Bills for which I have been fighting so long has passed; and I have the satisfaction of seeing that every point to which I objected has been altered; so that I have not mingled in the affray for nothing.

Pray tell me about yourself, and whether you are tolerably well; but how can you be well, when you have so many children and so many anxieties afloat? How does dear Georgiana do?—that honest and transparent girl; so natural, so cheerful, so true! A moral flower, whom I always think of, when I sketch in my mind a garden of human creatures.

Read Dr. Spry's 'Account of India,' and believe, if you can, (I do,) that within one hundred and fifty miles of Calcutta, there is a nation of cannibals living in trees. It is an amusing book. Read, also, Macaulay's Papers upon Indian Education, and the Administration of Justice in India; but I hardly think you care about India.

We have never been a single day without company, principally blue-stocking ladies, whose society Lord

Grey so much likes. Believe me, dear Lady Grey, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

409.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

September 6th, 1838.

If all the friends, dear Lady Holland, who have shared in your kindness and hospitality, were to give a little puff, you would be blown over to Calais with a gentle and prosperous gale. I admire your courage; and earnestly hope, as I sincerely believe, that you will derive great amusement and satisfaction, and therefore improved health, from your expedition.

I am out of temper with Lord Melbourne, and upon the subject of the Church; but in case of an election, I should vote as I always have done, with the Whigs. As for little John, I love him, though I chastise him. I have never lifted up my voice against the Duke of Lancaster; I should be the most ungrateful of men if I did.

We have had a run of blue-stocking ladies to Combe Florey this summer, a race you despise. To me they are agreeable, and less insipid than the general run of women; for *you know, my Lady, the female mind does not reason.*

Kindest regards to the Duke of Lancaster.

S. S.

410.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, December, 1838.

Awkward times, dear Lady Grey! However, you

see those you love, sooner than you otherwise would have seen them, and see them safely returned from a bad climate and disturbed country; and this is something, though not much. I do not see with whom Durham can coalesce. Not with Ministers, certainly; not with ——; not with Peel; scarcely with the Radicals. I see no light as to his future march. Will these matters bring Lord Grey up to town at the beginning of the session? I sincerely hope he may not think it necessary to place himself in such a painful and distressing situation. I think the Whigs are damaged, and that they will have considerable difficulty in the registration. The Hibberts are here, helping us to spend the winter; but nothing can make the country agreeable to me. It is bad enough in summer, but in winter is a fit residence only for beings doomed to such misery, for misdeeds in another state of existence.

On Sunday I was on crutches, utterly unable to put my foot to the ground. On Tuesday I walked four miles. Such is the power of colchicum! I shall write another letter about Church matters, and then take my leave of the subject; also, as I believe I told you before, a pamphlet against the Ballot.

What a strange affair is your Newcastle murder! it is impossible to comprehend it. I think you will want a cunning man from Bow-street.

Believe me, dear Lady Grey, ever your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

411.] To Sir George Philips.

Combe Florey, Feb. 11th, 1839.

My dear Philips,

I hear from George you have the gout, and that you have had it longer than you ought. It will be some comfort to you to know that I have had rather a sharp fit, which has turned my walking into waddling and limping.

When do you come to town? We shall be there on the 21st. I have sent you a pamphlet on the Ballot, and shall next week publish another letter to Archdeacon Singleton, and with that end the subject. You will of course think my pamphlet on Ballot to be on the wrong side of the question, but I think we are on the way to the Devil. The Government have very wisely flung your friend —— overboard.

I suspect Morpeth will be the new member of the Cabinet, perhaps the new Secretary for the Colonies. I presume Durham's statement was sent to the 'Times' by himself.

You ought to be very thankful that you are one of those persons who are born happy. If you had but £200 per annum you would be happy. I have often said of you, that you are the happiest man, and the worst rider, I ever knew.

I shall not be sorry to be in town. I am rather tired of simple pleasures, bad reasoning, and worse cookery.

Yours, my dear Philips, very sincerely,

Sydney Smith.

412.] To Mrs. Meynell.

Combe Florey, Feb. 12th, 1839.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

I have written a pamphlet upon the Ballot, and against it, and I would send it to you, but I know not how; therefore you had better get it in the ordinary way. It is published at Longman and Co.'s. Pray read it, and tell me what you think of it. Only think of my being so good a boy as to write conservative pamphlets! Did you ever think I should come to this? One hole, you see, is made in the Ministry. Will it make such a leak as to sink the vessel, or will they stop it?

Give my love to your nice little daughter. Has she met yet with any dandy who has made her serious?

Your affectionate friend,

Sydney Smith.

413.] To Roderick Murchison, Esq.

March 30th, 1839.

Dear Murchison,

I deny "that the older stratified rocks of Devonshire and Cornwall are the equivalents of the Carboniferous and Old Red Sandstone systems." I hold the Professor* and you to this rash assertion, and I am determined to answer you.

I am (whether you are right or wrong) very sorry you are going abroad. After I have answered you, I

* Professor Sedgwick, who, with Mr. Murchison, classified the rocks of Devonshire.

shall suspend my geological studies till your return; but perhaps I shall be suspended myself.

SYDNEY SMITH.

414.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Charles-street, April, 1839.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

The Government is always crazy, but I see no immediate signs of dissolution. The success of my pamphlet has been very great. I always told you I was a clever man, and you never would believe me.

You must study Macaulay when you come to town. He is incomparably the first lion in the Metropolis; that is, he writes, talks, and speaks better than any man in England.

Kind regards to your husband.

SYDNEY SMITH.

415.] To CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

Charles-street, Berkeley-square, June 11*th*, 1839.

My dear Sir,

Nobody more, and more justly, talked of than yourself.

The Miss Berrys, now at Richmond, live only to become acquainted with you, and have commissioned me to request you to dine with them Friday, the 29th, or Monday, July 1st, to meet a Canon of St. Paul's, the Rector of Combe Florey, and the Vicar of Halberton, —all equally well known to you; to say nothing of other and better people. The Miss Berrys and Lady

Charlotte Lindsay have not the smallest objection to be put into a Number, but, on the contrary, would be proud of the distinction; and Lady Charlotte, in particular, you may marry to Newman Noggs. Pray come; it is as much as my place is worth to send them a refusal.

SYDNEY SMITH.

416.] To MRS. GROTE.

33, *Charles-street, June 24th*, 1839.

I will dine with you, dear Mrs. Grote, on the 11th, with great pleasure.

The "Great Western" turns out very well,—grand, simple, cold, slow, wise, and good. I have been introduced to Miss ——; she abuses the privilege of literary women to be plain; and, in addition, has the true Kentucky twang through the nose, converting that promontory into an organ of speech. How generous the conduct of Mrs. ——, who, as a literary woman, might be ugly if she chose, but is as decidedly handsome as if she were profoundly ignorant! I call such conduct honourable.

You shall have a real philosophical breakfast here; all mind-and-matter men. I am truly glad, my dear Mrs. Grote, to add you to the number of my friends (*i. e.* if you will be added). I saw in the moiety of a moment that you were made of fine materials, and put together by a master workman; and I ticketed you accordingly. But do not let me deceive you; if you honour me with your notice, you will find me a theologian and a bigot, even to martyrdom.

Heaven forbid I should deny the right of Miss

——, or of any other lady, to ask me to dinner! the only condition I annex is, that you dine there also. As for any dislikes of mine, I would not give one penny to avoid the society of any man in England.

I do not preach at St. Paul's before the first Sunday in July; send me word (if you please) if you intend to come, and I (as the Americans say) will locate you. But do not flatter yourself with the delusive hope of a slumber; I preach violently, and there is a strong smell of sulphur in my sermons. I could not get Lady —— to believe you did not know her; she evidently considered it affectation. Why do you not consult Dr. Turnbull upon tic-douloureux? I told you a long story about it, of which, I thought at the time, you did not hear a single word.

Adieu, dear Mrs. Grote! Always, with best compliments to Mr. Grote, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

417.] TO MRS. GROTE.

33, *Charles-street, July 16th*, 1839.

Dear Mrs. Grote,

I am very sorry you have suffered so much; mine is not society sorrow, but real sorrow. If there is a real sign of a fool, it is to offer a remedy. *Aconitine*—why do you so despise it as not to ask a question about it?

I am truly glad you like what I have written; then I have not written in vain. I send you a criticism on my three volumes, which, I confess, gave me a great deal of pleasure; pray return it to me. I have not the smallest idea who wrote it; but it is evidently

written (my own vanity apart) by a very sensible man, and a good writer. Whether I have done what he says I have done, and am what he says I am, I do not know; but he has justly stated what I always aimed at, and what I wished to be. If I did not think you a very sensible woman, I would not run the risk of your thinking me vain; but I honestly confess that the praise and approbation of wise men is to me a very great pleasure.

I went last night to attend Mrs. Sydney to the Eruption of Hecla at the Surrey Zoological; we saw a pasteboard mountain, ejecting crackers and squibs. The long standing has given me a fit of the gout, and that renders it rather doubtful whether we can come to you; but if I am well enough, we shall be most happy to do so. Let nothing ever persuade you to go to the Surrey Zoological in the evening. Mr. Grote's subjects were intolerable.

I did not know Charles Austin was a sayer of good things; he has always seemed to me as something much better. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

418.] To JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

1839.

Dear Allen,

What is the effect of ballot on America and in France? My idea is, that in America nobody troubles himself how his inferiors vote, and that therefore it is a dead letter. Some States have it not; some who had it, have exchanged it for open voting. Am I right in these suppositions?

Tell me something of its effects in France, as between the representative and the constituent, and between the members of the Chamber and the Government. You will much oblige me by giving me some knowledge on these topics.

I had several fits of the gout of twelve hours' duration, and am now very well.

SYDNEY SMITH.

419.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, September 1839.

May I ask how my old friends do, and whether they are come back in good health and spirits?

I have done nothing since you went away but write little pamphlets; some, by your order, against Ballot, and others, by that of my own insubordinate spirit, against Bishops.

I think you will find the Whigs damaged. I date their fall in public estimation from their return to office after resignation. Gallantry and the chivalrous spirit are admirable in all the common courtesies of life; indispensable, when ladies are to be handed to their carriages, or defended from rudeness; but it ought not to meddle with politics. Most of the changes are bad. The appointment of —— will offend the aristocracy here, and the Canadians. There is no *prestige* in it. If good sense be the only thing wanted, send an attorney at 6*s.* 8*d.* per day. —— is a bad ingredient too.

We are both tolerably well. Mrs. Sydney a little worse than her years,—myself a little better.

SYDNEY SMITH.

420.] To THE COUNTESS GREY.

Charles-street, 1839.

My dear Lady Grey,

My news is, that Government are to beat Lord Stanley by four or five; and that, if beaten, they are not to go out. The threat of a dissolution has frightened some Members into a support of the Government. It seems as if there were more danger of an American, than of a French war.

We arrived in town, taking eighty miles of the Bath railroad, with which I was delighted. Before this invention, man, richly endowed with gifts of mind and body, was deficient in locomotive powers. He could walk four miles an hour, whilst a wild goose could fly eighty in the same time. I can run now much faster than a fox or a hare, and beat a carrier pigeon or an eagle for a hundred miles.

Had you the "Great Western," Mr. Webster? and how did he answer? Lord Grey, I know, hates "lions."

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

I have written another letter to Archdeacon Singleton, which, together with my pamphlet on the Ballot, have had remarkable success, and are left for you in Berkeley-square.

421.] To MRS. GROTE.

Combe Florey, Oct. 2nd, 1839.

Dear Mrs. Grote,

You have not mentioned a subject which would give

me more pleasure than any other,—your health. Your neighbours, the ——, have been staying here; they talked of you eulogically, in which I cordially joined; but when they came to details, I found they principally admired you for a recipe for brown bread, which is made by a baker near them according to your rules. I beg this recipe; and offer you, in return, a mode of curing hams. What a charming and sentimental commerce!

I cannot blame your decision, though I sincerely regret it; all excursions of that kind are promised upon the supposition of average moisture in the air, and average solidity in the soil. Your predictions, however, though legitimately founded on probabilities, are contrary to the fact. The weather is fine, and the country beautiful. I should be very glad if you were here; but what is deferred is not always lost. You have filled me with alarm about money, and I have buried a large sum in the garden; heaven send I may not forget in what bed! But does not long continuation of bad weather produce low spirits in the rich? Is Dives not occasionally affected by the Lazarophobia?

I don't know whether I am right, but I am extremely pleased with Jones's work upon Rent; his style is admirable, his views always philosophical, and his explanations clear. You live in the midst of political economists; pray tell me what they say about him. It must not be forgotten that he is a parson; but as you overlook it in me, forgive it in him. I would not have mentioned this, but that I am sure you would have heard it from his enemies.

—— has the infirmity of deciding, with the most

fallacious rapidity, upon all human subjects. Trevelyan is one of the first and most distinguished men in India.

Adieu! It would have been a real pleasure to me to see you here; pray come before you die, or rather, I should say, before I die. Ever, dear Mrs. Grote, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

422.] To LORD HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Oct. 5th, 1839.

My dear Lord Holland,

This is an extract of a letter from Grant, of Rothiemurchis, to his daughter, Mrs. ——, a friend of mine, who begs I will apply to you in his favour; but you know him as well or better than I do; and as he is a man of very liberal opinions, and always *was* so, when it was ruinous to entertain liberal opinions, I have no doubt you will strive to advance him, if you think he has other proper requisites.

You have been through dangers of fire and water, I hope with impunity. Dr. Holland is here,—at least I believe he is; for he is so locomotive, it is difficult to make similar assertions of him.

S. S.

423.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Green-street, October, 1839.

Dear Mrs. Meynell,

I think the Whigs are certainly strengthened. Macaulay, if he speak as well as he did before India,

must be considered an acquisition. Lord Clarendon, in all probability, a very important one. On the other side, they have had a great loss in Howick and Wood, and they lose three votes by the death of the two Dukes. They are in high spirits; and I have no doubt the Queen's marriage will be the first thing notified to the new Parliament. I have heard it from nobody, but I have no doubt of it.

I am quite delighted with my new house in Green-street. I have one leg in it, and the other here; it is everything I want or wish.

I feel for —— about her son at Oxford; knowing, as I do, that the only consequences of a University education are, the growth of vice and the waste of money.

I am in town all November. God bless you, dear friend!

SYDNEY SMITH.

424.] To MRS. ——.

Green-street, Nov. 4th, 1839.

My dear Mrs. ——,

Tell me a little about yourself. Where have you been? What have you been doing? How have you been faring?

I have been living very quietly in Somersetshire, and am now intensely occupied in settling my new house, which is the essence of all that is comfortable. Pray come and see it, if you come to town, and write me word before you come. I will give you very good mutton-chops for luncheon, seasoned with affectionate regard and respect.

My 'Works' (such as they are) have had a very rapid sale, and I think before the end of the year will come to a second edition. Mrs. Grote wrote me two or three letters in the course of the summer (which a certain person did not). She had half a mind to come to Combe Florey, but the other half was heavier and more powerful. What are your plans? I hope you have some regard for me; I have a great deal for you.

Always affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

425.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

December 28th, 1839.

I will dine with you on Saturday, my dear Lady Holland, with the greatest pleasure.

I have written against —— one of the cleverest pamphlets I ever read, which I think would cover —— and him with ridicule. At least it made me laugh very much in reading it; and there I stood, with the printer's devil, and the real devil close to me; and then I said, "After all, this is very funny, and very well written, but it will give great pain to people who have been very kind and good to me through life; and what can I do to show my sense of that kindness, if it is not by flinging this pamphlet into the fire?" So I flung it in, and there was an end! My sense of ill-usage remains of course the same. The dialogue between —— —— and —— is, or I should rather say, was, most admirable.

SYDNEY SMITH.

426.] To Mrs. Crowe.

January 6th, 1840.

I am very glad to find, dear Mrs. Crowe, that you are so comfortably arranged at Edinburgh. I am particularly glad that you are intimate with Jeffrey. He is one of the *best*, as well as the *ablest*, men in the country; and his friendship is to you, honour, safety, and amusement.

I hate young men, and I hate soldiers; but I will be gracious to ——, if he will call upon me.

Among the many evils of getting old, one is, that every little illness may probably be the last. You feel like a delinquent who knows that the constable is looking out after him. I am not going to live at Barnes, or to quit Combe Florey; if ever I do quit Combe Florey, it will probably be to give up my country livings, and to confine myself to London only.

My 'Works' are now become too expensive to allow of the dispersion and presentation of many copies, but I shall with pleasure order one for you: the bookseller will send it. I printed my reviews to show, if I could, that I had not passed my life merely in making jokes; but that I had made use of what little powers of pleasantry I might be endowed with, to discountenance bad, and to encourage liberal and wise, principles. The publication has been successful. The liberal journals praise me to the skies; the Tories are silent, grateful for my attack upon the Ballot.

Yours truly,

Sydney Smith.

427.] To Mrs. ——.

Combe Florey, Jan. 23rd, 1840.

Dear, fair, wise,

Your little note gave me great pleasure, for I am always mightily refreshed when the best of my fellow-creatures seem to remember and care for me. To you, who give routs where every gentleman is a Locke or a Newton, and every lady a Somerville or a Corinne, the printed nonsense you have sent me must appear extraordinary; but to me, in the country, it is daily-bread nonsense, and of everlasting occurrence.

The birds, presuming on a few fine days, are beginning to make young birds, and the roots to make young flowers. Very rash! as rash as John Russell with his Privilege quarrel.

I have not read Carlyle, though I have got him on my list. I am rather curious about him.

I will come and see you as soon as I come to town; in the meantime, believe me your sincere and affectionate friend,

Sydney Smith.

428.] To Mrs. ——.

Green-street, April 8th, 1840.

Dear Mrs. ——,

I wish I may be able to come on Monday, but I doubt. Will you come to a philosophical breakfast on Saturday,—ten o'clock precisely? Nothing taken for granted! Everything (except the Thirty-nine Articles) called in question—real philosophers!

We shall have some routs and dinners in May, when

I shall hope to see you. Many thanks, dear Mrs.——, for your kind expressions towards me. They are never (when they come from you) cast on barren and ungrateful soil. Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—My carriage shall call for you tomorrow at a quarter past ten, at Mrs. ——'s, whence we will proceeed to that scene of simplicity, truth, and nature,—a London rout.

429.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Green-street, June, 1840.

Thy servant is threescore-and-ten years old; can he hear the sound of singing men and singing women? A Canon at the Opera! Where have you lived? In what habitations of the heathen? I thank you, shuddering; and am ever your unseducible friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

430.] To LADY HOLLAND.

52, *Marine Parade, Brighton, June*, 1840.

My dear Lady Holland,

You will (because you are very good-natured) be glad to hear that Brighton is rapidly restoring Mrs. Sydney to health. She gets better every three hours; and if she goes on so, I shall begin to be glad that Dr.—— is not here.

I am giving a rout this evening to the only three persons I have yet discovered at Brighton. I have had handbills printed to find other London people, but

I believe there are none. I shall stay till the 28th. You *must* allow the Chain Pier to be a great luxury; and I think all rich and rational people living in London should take small doses of Brighton from time to time. There cannot be a better place than this to refresh metropolitan gentlemen and ladies, wearied with bad air, falsehood, and lemonade.

I am very deep in Lord Stowell's 'Reports,' and if it were war-time I should officiate as Judge of the Admiralty Court. It was a fine occupation to make a public law for all nations, or to confirm one; and it is rather singular that so sly a rogue should have done it so honestly. Yours ever,

SYDNEY SMITH.

431.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

June, 1840.

I choose to appear in your eyes a consistent and intelligent clergyman, and therefore must explain how I am at Brighton and in Berkeley-square at the same time on the 17th. I purpose to be at Brighton from the 14th to the 28th; coming up to eat off two or three engagements I had previously contracted, but not accepting any fresh engagements for that period.

S. S.

432.] TO JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

Combe Florey, August 26th, 1840.

My dear Whishaw,

I read the death of the Bishop of Chichester with sincere regret,—a thoroughly good and amiable man,

and as liberal as a bishop is permitted to be. I am much obliged to you for mentioning those circumstances which marked his latter end, and made the spectacle less appalling to those who witnessed it. Milnes has been here; to him succeeded our friend Mrs. Grote, who is now here, and very agreeable; she will remain with us, I hope, over Sunday.

I send you, by the post, my letter to the Bishop of London. It will not escape you that the King of Clubs was long in a state of spiritual destitution, as were the Edinburgh Reviewers,—all except me. Mrs. Sydney is much better than she was this time last year; the ventilation she got at Brighton still continues to minister to her health. I am scarcely ever free from gout, and still more afflicted with asthma, but keep up my spirits. I am truly glad to hear such accounts of your health, and remain, my dear Whishaw, ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

433.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

September 5th, 1840.

I should be very glad to hear how all is going on at Castle Howard, dear Lady Carlisle, and whether my Lord and you keep up health and spirits with tolerable success;—a difficult task in the fifth act of life, when the curtain must ere long drop, and the comedy or tragedy be brought to an end.

Mrs. Sydney is still living on the stock of health she laid up at Brighton; I am pretty well, except gout, asthma, and pains in all the bones, and all the flesh, of my body. What a very singular disease gout

is! It seems as if the stomach fell down into the feet. The smallest deviation from right diet is immediately punished by limping and lameness, and the innocent ankle and blameless instep are tortured for the vices of the nobler organs. The stomach having found this easy way of getting rid of inconveniences, becomes cruelly despotic, and punishes for the least offences. A plum, a glass of champagne, excess in joy, excess in grief,—any crime, however small, is sufficient for redness, swelling, spasms, and large shoes.

I have found it necessary to give —— a valedictory flagellation. I know you and my excellent friend, Earl Carlisle, disapprove of these things; but you must excuse all the immense differences of temper, training, situation, habits, which make Sydney Smith one sort of person, and the Lord of the Castle another,—and both right in their way. Lord Carlisle does not like the vehicle of a newspaper; but if a man want to publish what is too short for a pamphlet, what other vehicle is there? Lord Lansdowne, and Philpotts, and the Bishop of London make short communications in newspapers. The statement of duels is made in newspapers by the first men in the country. To write anonymously in a newspaper is an act of another description; but if I put my name to what I write, the mere vehicle is surely immaterial; and I am to be tried, not by *where* I write, but *what* I write. I send the newspaper.

Ah, dear Lady Carlisle! do not imagine, because I did not knock every day at your door, and molest you with perpetual inquiries, that I have been inattentive to all that has passed, and careless of what you and Lord Carlisle have suffered. I have a sincere respect

and affection for you both, and shall never forget your great kindness to me. God bless and preserve you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

434.] TO LADY DAVY.

Green-street, Nov. 28th, 1840.

Dear Lady Davy,

Do you remember that passage in the 'Paradise Lost' which is considered so beautiful?—

> "As one who, long in populous cities pent,
> Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
> Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
> Among the pleasant villages and farms
> Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight;
> The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
> Or flowers: each rural sight, each rural sound.
> If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
> What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
> *She* most; and in her look sums all delight."

I think this simile very unjust to London, and I have amended the passage. I read it over to Lady Charlotte Lindsay and the Miss Berrys. The question was, whom the gentleman should see first when he arrived in London; and after various proposals, it was at last unanimously agreed it must be *you*: so it stands thus:—

> "As one who, long in rural hamlets pent,
> Where squires and parsons deep potations make,
> With lengthen'd tale of fox, or timid hare,
> Or antler'd stag, sore vext by hound and horn,
> Forth issuing on a winter's morn, to reach
> In chaise or coach the London Babylon
> Remote, from each thing met conceives delight;
> Or cab, or car, or evening muffin-bell,

Or lamps: each city sight, each city sound.
If chance with nymph-like step the *Davy* pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
She most; and in her look sums all delight."

I tried the verses with names of other ladies, but the universal opinion was, in the conclave of your friends, that it must be you; and this told, now tell me, dear Lady Davy, how do you do? Shall we ever see you again? We are dying very fast here; come and take another look at us. Mrs. Sydney is in the country, in rather bad health; I am (gout and asthma excepted) very well.

The sword is slowly and reluctantly returning into its scabbard. The Ministry hangs by a thread. We are alarmed by the Auckland war.

You are much loved here, and much lamented; and this is pleasant, even though thousands of miles intervene. I should be glad to know that anybody under the equator or the southern tropic held me in regard and esteem.

SYDNEY SMITH.

435.] To R. MURCHISON, ESQ.

Combe Florey, 1840.

Dear Murchison,

Many thanks for your kind recollections of me in sending me your pamphlet, which I shall read with all attention and care. My observation has been necessarily so much fixed on missions of another description, that I am hardly reconciled to zealots going out with voltaic batteries and crucibles, for the conversion of mankind, and baptizing their fellow-creatures with the mineral acids; but I will endeavour to admire,

and believe in you. My real alarm for you is, that by some late decisions of the magistrates, you come under the legal definition of *strollers;* and nothing would give me more pain than to see any of the Sections upon the mill, calculating the resistance of the air, and showing the additional quantity of flour which might be ground *in vacuo*,—each man in the meantime imagining himself a Galileo.

Mrs. Sydney has eight distinct illnesses, and I have nine. We take something every hour, and pass the mixture from one to the other.

About forty years ago, I stopped an infant in Lord Breadalbane's grounds, and patted his face. The nurse said, "Hold up your head, Lord Glenorchy." This was the President of your society.* He seems to be acting an honourable and enlightened part in life. Pray present my respects to him and his beautiful marchioness.

SYDNEY SMITH.

Since writing this I have read your Memoir,—a little too flowery, but very sensible and good.

436.] To MRS. ——.

56, *Green-street*, *Nov.* 18*th*, 1840.

An earthquake may prevent me, dear Mrs. ——, a civil commotion attended with bloodshed, or fatal disease,—but it must be some cause as powerful as these. Pray return the enclosed when you have read it, as I have borrowed it. Yours affectionately,

S. S.

* Mr. Murchison was attending the British Association for the Advancement of Science, that met at Glasgow. The President was the Marquis of Breadalbane.

I have heard from Mrs. Grote, who is very well, and amusing herself with Horticulture and Democracy, —the most approved methods of growing cabbages and destroying kings.

437.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Combe Florey, 1840.

Dear Lady Morley,

Many thanks for a letter which was very agreeable to Mrs. Sydney and myself. The former of these personages is much better, and complains principally of increased dimensions, as the old Indians do of our Indian empire.

I am always glad when London time arrives; it always seems in the country as if Joshua were at work, and had stopped the sun. You, dear Lady Morley, have the reverse of Joshua's talent, and accelerate the course of that luminary:—

> By force prophetic Joshua stopp'd the sun,
> But Morley hastens on his course with fun,
> And listeners scarce believe the day is done.

Rumours have reached us of your dramatic fame.

The Bishop of London is behaving very well, and very like a man of sense. Admirable proclamation from Jackson. Read Lady Dacre—very good.

But I am getting garrulous, and will only add that I am, dear Lady Morley, with sincere respect and regard, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

438.] To the Countess Grey.

Green-street, Nov. 29th, 1840.

My dear Lady Grey,

No war, as you perceive; and Palmerston's star rising in the heavens. People who know that country say it is impossible the Turks can keep Syria. We seem dreadfully entangled in Oriental matters. Trade is very dull and falling off; and the Revenue, as you see, very deficient.

Melbourne gives up all foreign affairs to Palmerston, swearing at it all. Lord Grey would never have suffered any Minister for Foreign Affairs to have sent such a despatch as Palmerston's note to Guizot; it is universally blamed here. Pray don't go to war with France: that *must* be wrong.

I see Francis has vindicated himself from going to Dissenting chapels, with all the fervour of one who feels he will be a bishop.

The fallen prebendaries, like the devils in the first book of Milton, are shaking themselves, and threatening war against the —— of ——. I am endeavouring to imitate Satan.

You never say a word of yourself, dear Lady Grey. You have that dreadful sin of anti-egotism. When I am ill, I mention it to all my friends and relations, to the lord lieutenant of the county, the justices, the bishop, the churchwardens, the booksellers and editors of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews. God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

Sydney Smith.

439.] To Mrs. Grote.

Combe Florey, Dec. 20th, 1840.

I am improved in lumbago, but still, less upright than Aristides. Our house is full of beef, beer, young children, newspapers, libels, and mince-pies, and life goes on very well, except that I am often reminded I am too near the end of it. I have been trying ——'s 'Lectures on the French Revolution,' which I could not get on with, and am reading Thiers, which I find it difficult to lay down. —— is long and feeble; and though you are tolerably sure he will be dull, you are not equally sure he will be right. We are covered with snow, but utterly ignorant of what cold is, as are all natural philosophers.

What a remarkable woman she must be, that Mrs. Grote! she uses the word "*thereto*." Why use antiquated forms of expression? Why not wear antiquated caps and shoes? Of all women living, you least want these distinctions.

I join you sincerely in your praise of ——; she is beautiful, she is clear of envy, hatred, and malice, she is very clear of prejudices, she has a regard for me.

It will be a great baronet season,—a year of the Bloody Hand. I know three more baronets I can introduce you to, and four or five knights; but, I take it, the mock-turtle of knights will not go down. I see how it will end; Grote will be made a baronet; and if he is not, I will. The Ministers, who would not make me a bishop, can't refuse to make me a baronet. I remain always your attached friend,

Sydney Smith.

440.] To Lord Hatherton.

Dover: no date (*about* 1840).

Dear Littleton,

Your invitation has followed me to this place. I wish I could accept it; but about forty years ago I contracted an obligation to cherish my wife,* and I have been obliged to bring her here; not that I am gulled by the sight of green fields and the sound of singing-birds,—I am too old for that. To my mind there is no verdure in the creation like the green of ——'s face, and Luttrell talks more sweetly than birds can sing.

Sydney Smith.

441.] To Lady Holland.

Combe Florey, Jan. 3rd, 1841.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope you are better than when I left town, and that you have found a house. I have had two months' holiday from gout. Do not imagine I have forgotten my annual tribute of a cheese, but my carriage is in the hands of the doctor, and I have not been able to get to Taunton; for I cannot fall into that absurd English fashion of going in open carriages in the months of December and January,—seasons when I should prefer to go in a bottle, well corked and sealed.

The Hibberts are here, and the house full, light, and warm. Time goes on well. I do all I can to love the country, and endeavour to believe those poeti-

* Mrs. Sydney had been seriously ill, and he had been anxious she should try change of air.

cal lies which I read in Rogers and others, on the subject; which said deviations from truth were, by Rogers, all written in St. James's-place.

I have long since got rid of all ambition and wish for distinctions, and am much happier for it. The journey is nearly over, and I am careless and good-humoured; at least good-humoured for me, as it is not an attribute which has been largely conceded to me by Providence.

Accept my affectionate and sincere good wishes.

SYDNEY SMITH.

442.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Jan. 25th, 1841.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

Pray say all that is kind on my part to Miss Poulter, and express how much flattered I am by her present. I have no imagination myself, but am deeply in admiration of those who have; pray beg that we may meet as old friends, and embrace wherever we meet. I shall be in town the 17th of February. The Hibberts have suddenly left us, and we are in a state of collapse. We are all pretty well, my asthma excepted. Ever, dear G., affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

443.] To MRS. CROWE.

Combe Florey, Jan. 31*st,* 1841.

Dear Mrs. Crowe,

I quite agree with you as to the horrors of correspondence. Correspondences are like small-clothes

before the invention of suspenders; it is impossible to keep them up.

That episode of Julia is much too long. Your incidents are remarkable for their improbability. A boy goes on board a frigate in the middle of the night, and penetrates to the captain's cabin without being seen or challenged. Susan climbs into a two-pair-of-stairs window to rescue two grenadiers. A gentleman about to be murdered, is saved by rescuing a woman about to be drowned, and so on. The language is easy, the dialogue natural. There is a great deal of humour; the plot is too complicated. The best part of the book is Mr. and Mrs. Ayton; but the highest and most important praise of the novel is that you are carried on eagerly, and that it excites and sustains a great interest in the event, and therefore I think it a very good novel, and will recommend it.

It is in vain that I study the subject of the Scotch Church. I have heard it ten times over from Murray, and twenty times from Jeffrey, and I have not the smallest conception what it is about. I know it has something to do with oatmeal, but beyond that I am in utter darkness. Everybody here is turning Puseyite. Having worn out my black gown, I preach in my surplice; this is all the change I have made, or mean to make.

There seems to be in your letter a deep-rooted love of the amusements of the world. Instead of the ever gay Murray and the never silent Jeffrey, why do you not cultivate the Scotch clergy and the elders and professors? I should then have some hopes of you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

444.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Feb. 6th, 1841.

Many thanks, my dear Lady Grey, for your inquiries. Mrs. Sydney is better than she has been for a long time; I have no gout, but am suffering from inflamed eyes, proceeding from much reading and writing. Reading and writing, God knows, to very little use, but resorted to in the country from not knowing what else to do.

I read Guizot's 'Washington' in the summer. Nothing can be better, more succinct, more judicious, more true, more just; but I have done with reviewing. I will write when I have collected some news for you in London. I have read 'Susan Hopley.' The incidents are improbable, but the book took me on, and I kept reading it.

SYDNEY SMITH.

445.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Feb. 7th, 1841.

Dear Milnes,

Pray tell me if you remembered my commission of *papier chimique;* I am afraid you only thought of *papier politique.* You are generally supposed to be the author of all the late measures of the French Cabinet.

I purpose to be in town on the 17th, but the elements seem to purpose that I shall not. I often exclaim to the descending snow, "Pourquoi tant de fracas pour le voyage d'un chanoine à Londres?"

Answer this letter, dear Milnes, by return of post, or you shall have a poor time of it when I arrive.

SYDNEY SMITH.

446.] To R. Monckton Milnes, Esq.

Combe Florey, Feb. 14th, 1841.

My dear Sir,

I am very much obliged by your kindness in procuring for me the *papier chimique*. Pray let me know what I am in your debt: it is best to be scrupulous and punctilious in trifles. I should be very unhappy about Macleod and America, if I had not impressed upon myself, in the course of a long life, that there is always some misery of this kind hanging over us, and that being unhappy does no good. I console myself with Doddridge's Exposition and 'The Scholar Armed,' to say nothing of a very popular book, 'The Dissenter Tripped up.'

I remain, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

Sydney Smith.

447.] To R. Monckton Milnes, Esq.

Munden House, Friday, 11th, 1841.

Dear Milnes,

I will not receive you on these terms, but postpone you for safer times. I cannot blame you; but, seriously, dinners are destroyed by the inconveniences of a free Government. I have filled up your place, and bought your book.

Sydney Smith.

448.] To Mrs. ——.

Green-street, Grosvenor-square, March 5th, 1841.

My dear Mrs. ——,

At the sight of ——, away fly gaiety, ease, care-

lessness, happiness. Effusions are checked, faces are puckered up; coldness, formality, and reserve are diffused over the room, and the social temperature falls down to zero. I *could* not stand it. I know you will forgive me, but my constitution is shattered, and I have not nerves for such an occurrence.

S. S.

449.] To Mrs. ——.

March 6th, 1841.

My dear Mrs. ——,

Did you never hear of persons who have an aversion to cheese? to cats? to roast hare? Can you reason them out of it? Can you write them out of it? Would it be of any use to mention the names of mongers who have lived in the midst of cheese? Would it advance your cause to insist upon the story of Whittington and his Cat?

As for you, dear Mrs. ——, I have a sincere regard for you, and that you well know. I am truly sorry you are going. Mrs. Sydney and I dine out together, and will both come to you after, if possible, or if impossible. Excuse all this nonsense.

Ever, with true affection and friendship, yours,

S. S.

450.] To R. Monckton Milnes, Esq.

Green-street, May 11th, 1841.

Dear Milnes,

I am very much obliged by your reserving a place for me, but I have a party of persons who are coming

to breakfast with me; all very common persons, I am ashamed to say, who see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and trust to the olfactory nerves to discriminate filth from fragrance. Pray come to us on Thursday, and (oh, Milnes!) save the country!

SYDNEY SMITH.

451.] To MRS. MEYNELL.*

Green-street, May 22nd, 1841.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

This paper was quite white when it came here; it is the constant effect of our street.

I had a slight attack of fever, which kept me in bed for two nights, and was followed by a slight attack of gout. I am now tolerably well for a person who is never quite well. We spent two or three days at the Archbishop of York's, at Nuneham. There were Lord and Lady Burghersh, Rogers, and Granville Vernon: his daughter is a mass of perfections. I am glad your girl likes me. Give my love to her. I do not despair one day of convincing her of the superiority of the pavement over grass; but she is charming, and as fresh-minded as a sunbeam just touching the earth for the first time.

We are five hours and a half to Bridgewater, and from Bridgewater eleven miles. Till now I have lived for three days on waiters and veal cutlets. God bless you! Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

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* Written on green paper.

452.] To Mrs. Grote.

May 30th, 1841.

The devil has left me, dear Mrs. Grote, and I can walk. I am as proud of the new privilege of walking as Mr. Grote would be of a peerage; but I will not abuse it, as I have done before. * * * I have an unpleasant feeling today, and upon thinking what it is, I find that you are out of London; therefore the quantity of intelligent matter caring about, and understanding, and loving me, is sensibly diminished. * * * Tell me if you will come to my breakfast on Saturday.

Sydney Smith.

453.] To the Earl Grey.

No date.

My dear Lord Grey,

I have been today to see the cartoons, and I am quite delighted with them. I think Hammick is a tyrant, if he will not let you go. You will be able to see them perfectly well. I had no conception there was so much genius, so much cartoonery, such a power of grouping, and such accuracy of drawing, in the country. I never was more pleased; and I will never look again at an oil painting, except it should be of you, and that will excite in me all the sentiments of regard, respect, and gratitude I feel for the original.

Ever yours,

Sydney Smith.

454.] To Mrs. Procter.

June, 1841.

Dear Mrs. Procter,

May I drink tea with you the 15th? (it is not Milnes writing, but Sydney Smith), but may I? It will be a great pleasure to me, if not inconvenient to you.

I thank you sincerely for the Poems, which I will not only read, but sing. You have lent me also Cobbet's Advice to Young Men, a book therefore well suited to my time of life.

I hope you have been passing your time agreeably, or rather I should say, disagreeably, as I have not benefited by your proximity; but this London—it is a charming place, but I never do there what I please, or see those I like. At this moment, when I am agreeably occupied in writing to you, there is a loud knock at the door.

I am about to suspend animation in the country for a week, and I beg you to answer my request at Munden House, Watford, Herts. Animate, semi-animate, or in the full flow of metropolitan life,

I remain, my dear Madam, truly yours,

Sydney Smith.

P. S.—I write on this paper because it is the colour in which I wish to see every object in human life.*

* The paper is rose-colour.—A. B. P.

455.] To Miss G. Harcourt.

Combe Florey, July 24th, 1841.

My dear Georgiana,

That innocent Betty may not be blamed, and that I may not be suspected of larceny, I must tell you that I have innocently and unconsciously carried away your silver pencil-case. I would continue to steal it, only it may be a gift from a friend.

I enjoyed my visit at Nuneham very much. It gave me great pleasure to see the best of Archbishops in the best of health and spirits. Your niece Marianne pleased me very much. She has a volume of good qualities; in short, I was pleased with everybody and displeased with nobody, and yet I had the gout all the time, and often painfully; but principally, dear Georgiana, I was pleased with you, because you are always kind and obliging to your old and sincere friend,

Sydney Smith.

456.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Aug. 24th, 1841.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope that Lord Grey and you are continuing in robust health. We are tolerably well here; the gout is never far off, though not actually present: it is the only enemy that I do not wish to have at my feet.

I hear Morpeth is going to America, a resolution I think very wise, and which I should decidedly carry into execution myself, if I were not going to Heaven.

We have had divers people at Combe Florey, but

none whom you would particularly care about. How many worlds there are in this one world! We are just nine hours from door to door by the railroad. The Gally Knights left Combe Florey after nine o'clock, and were in Grosvenor-street before six. I call this a very serious increase of comfort. I used to sleep two nights on the road; and to travel with a pair of horses is miserable work. I dare say the railroad has added ten per cent. to the value of property in this neighbourhood.

We are in great alarm here for the harvest. It is all down, and growing as it stands. It is Whig weather, and favourable to John Russell's speeches on the Corn Laws. Remember me very kindly to Lord Grey and Georgiana, and believe me your steady and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

457.] TO LADY DAVY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 31*st*, 1841.

My dear Lady Davy,

I thank you for your very kind letter, which gave to Mrs. Sydney and to myself much pleasure, and carried us back agreeably into past times. We are both tolerably well, bulging out like old houses, but with no immediate intention of tumbling down. The country is in a state of political transition, and the shabby are preparing their consciences and opinions for a tack.

I think all our common friends are doing well. Some are fatter, some more spare, none handsomer;

but, such as they are, I think you will see them all again. But pray do you ever mean to see *any* of us again? or do you mean to end your days at Rome? a town, I hear, you have entirely enslaved, and where, in spite of your Protestantism, you are omnipotent. Your Protestantism (but I confess that reflection makes me melancholy)—your attachment to the clergy generally—the activity of your mind—the Roman Catholic spirit of proselytism—all alarm me. I am assured they will get hold of you, and we shall lose you from the Church of England. Only promise me that you will not give up, till you have subjected their arguments to my examination, and given me a chance of reply: tell them that there is *un Canonico dottissimo* to whom you have pledged your theological faith. Excuse my zeal; it is an additional proof of my affection.

Believe me, dear Lady Davy,

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

458.] To MISS G. HARCOURT.

Combe Florey, September, 1841.

My dear Georgiana,

There is something awful and mysterious in the curled cress-seed you sent me. Some of it will not come up at all; other seeds put on the form of all sorts of plants, and will in time be oaks and elm-trees. We wait the result in patience, and you shall hear it.

There is an end of all earthly Whiggism, and that unfortunate class of men are getting into holes and corners as fast as possible. Some are taking orders,

some are going to the Continent, some to America, some going over to Peel, some to Jerusalem. I think —— very likely to marry a Circassian, a large convex lady, filling up great space morally and physically. He is an ambitious man, though he looks as if his brethren had just sold him to the Ishmaelite merchants.

Mr. —— seems to be the most important man north of the Humber. How can it be otherwise, dear Georgiana, with such felicities in the pulpit as "the brilliant reptile's polished fang"? Massillon has nothing equal to this.

We have had a great deal of company. Of all the saints, I hate La Trappe the most: I believe he has been canonized. I wrote to W——, at Plymouth, conceiving him to be among the philosophers, of course, and not believing that an acid and an alkali would combine without him. Having received no answer from him, I imagined he had either quitted the world or the Established Church; or that he was composing a pamphlet against Dr. Simon Magus the ——. My kind regards to him.

I am delighted to hear of the health and activity of the Archbishop. Present to him, if you please, my homage. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

459.] TO MRS. GROTE.

Sidmouth, Sept. 14th, 1841.

Dear Mrs. Grote,

We are come here for a few days; it is very lovely,

and very stupid. Your excursion to Brittany will be very pleasant, but not for the reasons you give. I have no idolatry for Madame de Sévigné; she had merely a fine epistolary style. There is not a page of Madame de Staël where there is not more thought, and very often, thoughts as just as they are new.

I am drawing up a short account of the late Francis Horner, which Leonard Horner is to insert in a Memoir he is about to publish of his brother: I read it to Mrs. Sydney, who was much pleased with it, and I think you will not dislike it. I wish you had known Horner.

There is a report that the curates are about to strike, that they have mobbed several rectors, and that a body of bishops' chaplains are coming down by the railroad to disperse them. Thank God, the heats are passed away; I was completely exhausted, gave up locomotion, and poured cold water on my head.

You do not say, but I presume you leave England the beginning of October. I will endeavour to look as much like the Apollo Belvidere as a corpulent Canon can do, when you return.

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

460.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 8th, 1841.

My dear Lady Grey,

I do not believe that Peel had anything to do, as some of the Whigs believe, with the shooting at Lord

Howick; however, I am very glad he survives, and is returned to Parliament, where, from his abilities and station, he has such an undoubted right to be. I am glad to find you are all so well. I am not ill, but should be much better if I lived in a colder climate. Lady Georgiana is one of the best persons in the world, and is always sure to do what is right.

I see Mr. —— has been fighting the Puseyites. I am sorry for it, because, as his sincere friend, I wish he would neither speak nor write. He is a thoroughly amiable, foolish, learned man, and had better bring himself as little into notice as possible.

Pray read the first volume of Elphinstone's 'India.' The news from China gives me the greatest pleasure. I am for bombarding all the exclusive Asiatics, who shut up the earth, and will not let me walk civilly and quietly through it, doing no harm, and paying for all I want. We are in for a dozen years of Tory power at least, and the country will fast lapse into monarchical and ecclesiastical habits. In all revolutions of politics, I shall always remain, dear Lady Grey, sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

461.] To MRS. ——.

Green-street, Oct. 29th, 1841.

My dear Mrs. ——,

It grieves me to think you will not be in England this winter. The privations of winter are numerous enough without this. The absence of leaves and flowers I could endure, and am accustomed to; but the absence of amiable and enlightened women I have

not hitherto connected with the approach of winter, and I do not at all approve of it.

Great forgeries of Exchequer Bills in England, and all the world up in arms; the evil to the amount of £200,000 or £300,000. Sanguine people imagine Lord Monteagle will be hanged. I am a holder of Exchequer Bills to some little amount, and am quaking for fear. Poor Jeffrey is at Empson's, very ill, and writing in a melancholy mood of himself. He seems very reluctant to resign his seat on the Bench, and no wonder, where he gains every day great reputation, and is of great use;—still he may gain a few years of life if he will be quiet, and fall into a private station.

Mrs. Grote is, I presume, abroad, collecting at Rome, for Roebuck and others, anecdotes of Catiline and the Gracchi. She came to Combe Florey again this year, which was very kind and flattering. I have a high opinion of, and a real affection for her; she has an excellent head, and an honest and kind heart.

The Tories are going on quite quietly, and are in for a dozen years. I am living in London this winter quite alone;—pity me, and keep for me a little portion of remembrance and regard. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

462.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Munden House, Watford, 1841.

My dear Murray,

I am extremely obliged by your kind attention in writing to me respecting the illness of our friend Jeffrey; I had seen it in the papers of today for the

first time, just as your letter arrived, and was about to write. Whoever, at his period of life, means to go on, and to be well, must institute the most rigid and Spartan-like discipline as to food. These are the conditions of nature, as plain as if they had been drawn up on parchment by a Writer to the Signet upon the proper stamp.

The most sanguine of the Whigs think the next Parliament will be much the same as this; that parties will be as equally balanced. This is the opinion of Charles Wood and Lord Duncannon. The most sanguine of the Tories think they shall gain fifty votes. I have no opinion on the subject.

It will give me great pleasure, my dear Murray, to see you in London next spring; you have such an extensive acquaintance there, that you should keep it up.

I am staying here with the Hibberts. Nothing can exceed the comfort of the place. Happy the father who sees his daughters so well placed! I am very glad the Archbishop of Dublin has given something to Shannon, whom I know, from your statements and from my own observation, to be a very excellent person. I will certainly read his book.

Yours, dear Murray, most sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

464.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, December, 1841.

It shall be done, dearest G., as soon as I can get some silver paper adapted for foreign postages. I be-

lieve Lady Davy to be the most kind and useful person whose acquaintance can be made at Rome.

You may laugh, dear G., but, after all, the country is most dreadful! The real use of it is to find food for cities; but as for a residence of any man who is neither butcher nor baker, nor food-grower in any of its branches, it is a dreadful waste of existence and abuse of life. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

I called on Miss —— last time I was in London. The answer at the door was, "She was gone from thence, but was to be heard of at the Temple."

465.] TO MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Dec. 1841.

My dear Georgina,

It is indeed a great loss* to me; but I have learnt to live as a soldier does in war, expecting that, on any one moment, the best and the dearest may be killed before his eyes.

Promise me, in the midst of these afflicting deaths, that you will remain alive; and if Death does tap at the door, say, "I can't come; I have promised a parson to see him out."

These verses were found in Lord Holland's room in his handwriting:—

"Nephew of Fox, and friend of Grey,—
Enough my meed of fame,
If those who deign'd to observe me say
I tarnish'd neither name."

* The death of Lord Holland.

I have gout, asthma, and seven other maladies, but am otherwise very well. God bless you, Gem of Needwood Forest!

SYDNEY SMITH.

466.] To LADY ASHBURTON.

Dogmersfield Park, 1841.

You have very naturally, my dear Lady Ashburton, referred to me for some information respecting St. Anthony. The principal anecdotes related of him are, that he was rather careless of his diet; and that, instead of confining himself to boiled mutton and a little wine and water, he ate of side-dishes, and drank two glasses of sherry, and refused to lead a life of great care and circumspection, such as his constitution required. The consequence was, that his friends were often alarmed at his health; and the medical men of Jerusalem and Jericho were in constant requisition, taking exorbitant fees, and doing him little good.

You ought to be very thankful to me (Lord Ashburton and yourself) for resisting as firmly and honourably as I do, my desire to offer myself at the Grange; but my health is so indifferent, and my spirits so low, and I am so old and half-dead, that I am mere lumber; so that I can only inflict myself upon the Mildmays, who are accustomed to Mr. ——; and I dare not appear before one who crosses the seas to arrange the destinies of nations, and to chain up in bonds of peace the angry passions of the people of the earth.

Still I can preach a little; and I wish you had wit-

nessed, the other day, at St. Paul's, my incredible boldness in attacking the Puseyites. I told them that they made the Christian religion a religion of postures and ceremonies, of circumflexions and genuflexions, of garments and vestures, of ostentation and parade; that they took up tithe of mint and cummin, and neglected the weightier matters of the law,—justice, mercy, and the duties of life; and so forth.

Pray give my kind regards to the ambassador of ambassadors; and believe me, my dear Lady Ashburton, with benedictions to the whole house, ever sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

467.] To R. MURCHISON, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Dec. 26th, 1841.

Dear Murchison,

Many thanks for your yellow book,* which has just come down to me. You have gained great fame, and I am very glad of it. Had it been in theology, I should have been your rival, and probably have been jealous of you; but as it is in geology, my benevolence and real goodwill towards you have fair play. I shall read you out aloud today; Heaven send I may understand you! Not that I suspect your perspicuity, but that my knowledge of your science is too slender for that advantage: a knowledge which just enables me to distinguish between the caseous and the cretaceous formations; or, as the vulgar have it, to "know chalk from cheese."

* The *yellow book* was an inaugural address to the Dudley and Midland Geological Society.

There are no people here, and no events, so I have no news to tell you, except that in this mild climate my orange-trees are now out of doors, and in full bearing. Immediately before my window there are twelve large oranges on one tree. The trees themselves are not the Linnæan orange-tree, but what are popularly called the bay-tree, in large green boxes of the most correct shape, and the oranges well secured to them with the best packthread. They are universally admired, and, upon the whole, considered to be finer than the Ludovican orange-trees of Versailles.

Yours, my dear Murchison,

SYDNEY SMITH.

468.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Jan. 10th, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

Tell me if you think this sketch is like,* and what important feature I have left out or misrepresented. Remember, it is not an *éloge*, but an analysis.

I heard, when I was in London, that my old correspondent, Archdeacon Singleton, would be the first Tory bishop. He is a great friend of Peel's; they could not select a better man.

I pass my life in reading. The moment my eyes fail, I must give up my country preferment. I have met with nothing new or very well worth meeting, except the curious discoveries of ancient American cities in Mexico, by Stephens; which, I presume, has

* Enclosed in the above letter was the portrait of Lord Holland, to be found in the Memoir, p. 285.

been read at Howick. I am very glad Lord Howick is in Parliament: his honesty, ability, and rank make it desirable for the country he should be there.

I hope Lord Grey has read, and likes, Macaulay's review of Warren Hastings. It is very much admired. I believe he is unaffectedly glad to have given up office. Literature is his vocation.

I shall be very curious to know the impression America produces on Lord Morpeth. He is acute, and his opinions always very just. It is a fortunate thing for the world, that the separate American States are making such progress in dishonesty, and are absolutely and plainly refusing to pay their debts. They would soon have been too formidable, if they had added the moral power of good faith to their physical strength.

I beg my kind regards to Lord Grey and Lady Georgiana; and remain always, dear Lady Grey, with sincere respect and affection, your friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

469.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Feb. 6th, 1842.

My dear Philips,

I have suffered a great deal this winter from dulness and *ennui*. I am not one of those mortals that have "infinite resources in themselves," but am fitted up with the commonest materials, and require to be amused. However, I shall soon be in London, where I will take my revenge. Hibbert not being here, I have had no one to argue with. The neighbouring

clergy never attempt it, or they are checkmated the second or third move. Such sort of rumours as you allude to are disagreeable, especially to young people, who imagine mankind have left off hunting, shooting, and ploughing, to speculate upon them.

Are you not struck with the diplomatic gallantry of Lord Ashburton? He resembles Regulus. I tell him that the real cause of the hostility of America is, that we are more elegant, and speak better English than they do.

The opening of the Session was very milk-and-watery. The secession of the —— is a great accession of strength to Peel. —— is, besides his violence, a weak, foolish man. I met him two or three times at Mr. ——'s, and have no doubt that he is anserous and asinine.

I want very much to write something, but cannot bring myself to do it,—principally from the great number of topics which offer themselves, all of which would be equally agreeable to me. I am very glad you have thrown away your last fit of gout. Considering your dreadful indulgences in the second course, I think they have let you off very easily. Mrs. Sydney has certainly taken a new lease. She is become less, can walk, and has much more enjoyment of life. I am very well, asthma excepted. God bless you, dear Philips!

I remain, your old and sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

470.] To Lord Francis Egerton.*

56, *Green-street, Feb.* 18*th*, 1842.

Dear Lord Francis,

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me the Pilgrimage, which I have read with real pleasure; it is all good, but what I like best is the 53rd, and that train of thought followed out in the subsequent stanzas. The toil and heat of the journey supported by the animation of the religious scenery; this is truly poetical. I thought also the end very beautiful.

I have sent to the press the pamphlet on the Marriage Act, as you desired. Ever very truly yours,

Sydney Smith.

471.] To the Countess Grey.

Green-street, March 16*th*, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

A most melancholy occurrence,—the death of poor Singleton! So unexpected, and so premature! He was an excellent specimen of an English clergyman, and I most heartily and sincerely regret his loss. We shall be very glad to see you here. This is the spot, I am convinced, where all the evils of life are soonest forgotten and most easily endured.

I have no news to tell you. We are all talking here of India and Income; the one circumscribed by the Affghans, and the other by Peel. The Duke of Norfolk is dead.

John Grey seems to be a very sensible, pleasing

* Now the Earl of Ellesmere.

young man. His refusal of the living of Sunbury convinces me that he is not fond of gudgeon-fishing. I had figured to myself you and Lord Grey and myself engaged in that occupation upon the river Thames.

S. S.

472.] To Charles Dickens, Esq.

May 14th, 1842.

My dear Dickens,

I accept your obliging invitation conditionally. If I am invited by any man of greater genius than yourself, or one by whose works I have been more completely interested, I will repudiate you, and dine with the more splendid phenomenon of the two.

Ever yours sincerely,

Sydney Smith.

473.] To Miss G. Harcourt.

Green-street, July 7th, 1842.

Dear Georgiana,

What a pretty name is Georgiana! Many people would say, what a pretty name Georgiana is! but this would be inelegant; and it is more tolerable to be slovenly in dress than in style. Dress covers the mortal body, and adorns it, but style is the vehicle of the spirit.

Now, touching our stay with you, dear young lady, you said, "Stay longer: one day is not enough;" and I myself think such a sojourning hasty and fugacious. It all comes from my modesty; but Mrs. Sydney tells me I am endurable for two days, so we will stay with

you till Friday morning after breakfast, you and my Lord being willing, which I shall suppose you are, unless I hear to the contrary.

I have many other things to say to you, but I postpone them till we meet. It is time to put an end to my paper volubility, and you know how I always end my letters by telling you (and the problems of Euclid are not more true) that I am your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

474.] To MISS G. HARCOURT.

Combe Florey, July 16th, 1842.

My dear Georgiana,

We had a very unpleasant journey home, from the tossing and heaving of our own carriage, in which we remained, instead of going into one of the great carriage-cottages. The next time we shall try the other plan.

Many thanks for your kindness and hospitality. I was a little damaged by that handsome sister of Mrs. ——: such a fine figure, and such a beautiful and commanding countenance. I talked sensibly for ten minutes, without a single piece of foolishness,—just as a rational creature would have done. I liked Miss ——, but she was eclipsed by the new beauty, whom, if I were young and free, I think I should pursue even to the tabernacle, out-rant her preachers, and become her favourite pulpit-fool.

Combe Florey looked beautiful, and our parsonage the perfection of comfort. I have now put off my chrysalis wings, and assume the grub state. You re-

main, dear Georgiana, a chrysalis all the year round, —for there is very little difference between Bishopthorpe and Piccadilly, and none between Nuneham and Grosvenor-square.

I have put off all the catalogue of domestic evils till Monday;—sick cows, lame horses, frail females, mischievous boys, and small felonies!

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

475.] To SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Aug. 16th, 1842.

My dear Philips,

I am extremely glad to hear that Lady Philips and you are so well. Mrs. Sydney and I are resolved to follow your example, and have been imitating you in this particular for some time. The only point in which our practice differs is, that Mrs. Sydney and I get larger and larger, as we get older; you and Lady Philips become less and less. You will die of smallness,—we shall perish from diameter. There has certainly been some serious mistake about this summer. It was intended for the tropics; and some hot country is cursed with our cold rainy summer, losing all its cloves and nutmegs, scarcely able to ripen a pine-apple out of doors, or to squeeze a hogshead of sugar from the cane.

I agree in all you say about the Income Tax. Never was there such an obscure piece of penmanship! It must have been drawn up by some one as ignorant of law language as Dr. —— is of medicine. What dreadful blunders that poor Medico will make! Dreadful

will be the confusion between the schedules; worse than the confusion of phials by that nasty little boy, Robert Rhubarb, in his shop, whom he has taken as his apprentice, at a pound a year and his breeches.

I am a good deal alarmed at the slow return of prosperity to the manufacturers, but still do not give up my opinion of amelioration. I should like very much to see a dispassionate examination of the present state of trade and manufactures. But who is dispassionate on such a subject? The writer has either lost or gained, or is a violent Whig or a violent Tory.

There seems to be some appearance as if Lord Ashburton had effected his object. He writes home that he may be expected any day, and that they are to write no more; and the papers say that the heads of the treaty are agreed upon. If he have completed his object, it is one of the cleverest and most brilliant things done in my time, and he has honestly won his earldom. I never had much belief in his success, because I did not imagine that the Americans ever really intended to give up a cause of quarrel, which might hereafter be so subservient to their ambition and extension. God bless you, my dear old friend!

SYDNEY SMITH.

476.] TO LADY WENLOCK.

Combe Florey, 1842.

My dear Lady Wenlock,

I am heartily sorry for the necessity which takes you to Italy. You have many friends, who will be truly anxious for your welfare and happiness; pray place us on that list. The constant kindness and at-

tention I have received from Lord Wenlock and yourself have bound me over to you, and made me sincerely your friend, and your highly obliged friend. I will write you a line now and then, if you will permit me, to tell you how the world literary and ecclesiastical is going on.

Many thanks for the charge, which I will certainly read. If I am as much pleased with it as you are, I am sure my pleasure will be mingled with no small share of surprise; for though I think the Bishop of —— a very amiable man, I did not think I should ever read with approbation, or indeed read at all, ten pages of his writing.

I beg to be kindly remembered to Miss Lawley, whom Mrs. Sydney and I have fairly fallen in love with; so affable, so natural, so handsome,—you will never keep her long, for I should think it a perfect infamy in any young man of rank and fortune to be three days in her company without making her an offer.

My kindest wishes and earnest benediction for you and yours, dear Lady Wenlock,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—The charge is admirable; I have written to the Bishop about it.

477.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 26th, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you have survived the heat; I have done so, out with some difficulty. After the heat came the

riots. The only difference between these and the former manufacturing riots is, that the mob have got hold, under the name of Chartism, of some plan for political innovation; but that plan is so foolish, that I do not think it will be long-lived.

If any one bearing the name of Grey comes this way, send him to us: I am *Grey-men-ivorous*. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! I will not scold you any more; silent or scribbling, you shall have your own way, provided you will believe me to be your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

478.] TO LADY DAVY.

September 11th, 1842.

My dear Lady Davy,

There is a demand for you in England, and a general inquiry whether you have given us up altogether. I always defend you, and say, if you have so done, that it is from no want of love for us, but from a rooted dislike of rheumatism, catarrh, and bodily *mal-être*, such as all true Britons undergo for eleven months and three weeks in the year.

What have I to tell you of our old friends? Lady —— is tolerably well, with two courses and a French cook. She has fitted up her lower rooms in a very pretty style, and there receives the shattered remains of the symposiasts of the house. Lady —— has captivated Mr. ——, though they have not proceeded to the extremities of marriage. Mr. —— is going gently down-hill, trusting that the cookery in another planet may be at least as good as in this; but not without

apprehensions that for misconduct here he may be sentenced to a thousand years of tough mutton, or condemned to a little eternity of family dinners.

I have not yet discovered of what I am to die, but I rather believe I shall be burnt alive by the Puseyites. Nothing so remarkable in England as the progress of these foolish people. I have no conception what they mean, if it be not to revive every absurd ceremony, and every antiquated folly, which the common sense of mankind has set to sleep. You will find at your return a fanatical Church of England, but pray do not let it prevent your return. We can always gather together, in Park-street and Green-street, a chosen few who have never bowed the knee to Rimmon.

Did you meet at Rome my friend Mrs. ——? Give me, if you please, some notion of the impression she produced upon you. She is very clever, very good-natured, and good-hearted, but the Lilliputians are afraid of her. We shall be truly glad to see you again, but I think you will never return. Why should you give up your serene heavens and short winters, to re-enter this garret of the earth? Yet there are those in the garret who know how to appreciate you, and no one better than your old and sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

479.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

No date.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

I have just sent a long letter to the brother of Francis Horner, which he is to publish in his Memoir of my old friend. I had great pleasure in writing it. You

and Lord Carlisle will, I am sure, justify all the good I have said of him.

Even Archbishops of Canterbury must die. Archbishops of York seem to be the only persons exempt. I wonder who will succeed. It is of great importance that Archbishops should be tall. They ought not to take them under six feet, without their shoes or wigs. Lord Liverpool meant to elevate Kaye, the Bishop of Lincoln, if the see of Canterbury had become vacant in his time; but the Church would not last twenty years with such a little man.

I hope you are well and happy, dear Lady Carlisle, and that every Victoria's head that reaches Castle Howard brings you pleasing intelligence of sons, daughters, and grandchildren.

SYDNEY SMITH.

480.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Sept. 12th, 1842.

My dear Murray,

How did the Queen receive you? What was the general effect of her visit? Was it well managed? Does she show any turn for metaphysics? Have you had much company in the Highlands?

Mrs. Sydney and I are both in fair health,—such health as is conceded to moribundity and caducity.

Horner applied to me, and I sent him a long letter upon the subject of his brother, which he likes, and means to publish in his Memoirs. He seeks the same contribution from Jeffrey. Pray say to Jeffrey that he ought to send it. It is a great pity that the subject has been so long deferred. The mischief has all pro-

ceeded from the delays of poor Whishaw, who cared too much about reputation, to do anything in a period compatible with the shortness of human life. If you have seen Jeffrey, tell me how he is, and if you think he will stand his work.

We have the railroad now within five miles. Bath in two hours, London in six,—in short, everywhere in no time! Every fresh accident on the railroads is an advantage, and leads to an improvement. What we want is, an overturn which would kill a bishop, or, at least, a dean. This mode of conveyance would then become perfect. We have had but little company here this summer. Luttrell comes next week. I have given notice to the fishmongers, and poulterers, and fruit-women! Ever, dear Murray, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

481.] To SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Sept. 13th, 1842.

My dear Philips,

I have no belief at all in the general decay of English manufactures; and I believe before Christmas the infernal regions of Manchester will be in an uproar of manufacturing activity. I have made my return of income, but I have done it by the light of nature, unassisted by the Act. They should not put such men as Dr. W—— to interpret difficult Acts. Your friend Rolfe is always liked by the Bar. He gives universal satisfaction.

I hear that Lady Philips is a good deal alarmed at the idea of Vigne, the traveller in Caboul, being a Mahometan. I have no belief that he is so; but you

had better inquire of Dr. Wright about it, and that will put the clergyman of the parish at his ease.

It seems quite useless to kill the Chinese. It is like killing flies in July; a practice which tires the cruelest schoolboy. I really do not know what is to be done, unless to send Napier, who, for a sum of money, would dethrone the Emperor, and bring him here. You should read Napier's two little volumes of the war in Portugal. He is an heroic fellow, equal to anything in Plutarch; and moreover a long-headed, clever hero, who takes good aim before he fires. I had a letter yesterday from Howick. They are all expecting in Northumberland that the Queen will return by land.

I hope you have given up riding, and yielded to the alarms of your friends. Indeed, my dear old friend, it is perilous to see you on horseback. If you had ever the elements of that art, there might be some hope, but you know I never could succeed in teaching you, either by example or precept.

Ever, my dear Philips, most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

482.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Sept. 13th, 1842.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am sorry to hear Allen is not well; but the reduction of his legs is a pure and unmixed good; they are enormous,—they are clerical! He has the creed of a philosopher and the legs of a clergyman; I never saw such legs,—at least, belonging to a layman.

Read 'A Life in the Forest,' skipping nimbly; but there is much of good in it.

It is a bore, I admit, to be past seventy, for you are left for execution, and are daily expecting the death-warrant; but, as you say, it is not anything very capital we quit. We are, at the close of life, only hurried away from stomach-aches, pains in the joints, from sleepless nights and unamusing days, from weakness, ugliness, and nervous tremors; but we shall all meet again in another planet, cured of all our defects. —— will be less irritable; —— more silent; —— will assent; Jeffrey will speak slower; Bobus will be just as he is; I shall be more respectful to the upper clergy; but I shall have as lively a sense as I now have of all your kindness and affection for me.

SYDNEY SMITH.

483.] To MRS. MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Sept. 13th, 1842.

Dearest Gee,

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the grapes, except the beauty of the pine-apple. How well you understand the clergy!

I am living, lively and young as I am, in the most profound solitude. I saw a crow yesterday, and had a distant view of a rabbit today. I have ceased to trouble myself about company. If anybody thinks it worth while to turn aside to the Valley of Flowers, I am most happy to see them; but I have ceased to lay plots, and to toil for visitors. I save myself by this much disappointment.

SYDNEY SMITH.

484.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Sept. 19th, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

Thank God, this fine summer, which you so admire, is over! I have suffered dreadfully from it. I was only half-alive, and could with difficulty keep all my limbs together, and make them perform their proper functions.

You wrote me a very kind letter; I am very much obliged to you for it. I am very proud of the friendship of yourself and Lord Grey, and value myself more, because you set some value upon me. Luttrell is staying here; he is remarkably well, considering that he has been remarkably well for so many years. You never seem tired of Howick, or if you are, you do not confess it. I am more unfortunate or more honest. I tire of Combe Florey after two months, and sigh for a change, even for the worse. This disposition in me is hereditary; my father lived, within my recollection, in nineteen different places.

Lord Ashburton seems to have done very well. The treaty can hardly be a bad one; any concession was better than war. He owes his success, not more to his own dexterity, than to the present poverty and distress of America. They are in a state of humiliation. The State of Pennsylvania cheats me this year out of £50. There is nothing in the crimes of kings worse than this villany of democracy. The mob positively refuse all taxation for the payment of State debts.

I have heard from several London people the details of —— ——. It is among the most remarkable

events of my time, and very frightful. I never longed to steal anything but some manuscript sermons from my brother clergymen, and I have hitherto withstood the temptation.

SYDNEY SMITH.

485.] To LORD DENMAN.

Combe Florey, October, 1842.

My dear Lord,

I have received your speech upon affirmations; and though it is not said so on the white leaf, I believe you sent it to me: if not, leave me in the honourable delusion.

Your great difficulty in arguing such a question is akin to that of proving that two and two are equivalent to four. All that the Legislature ought to inquire is, whether this scruple is now become so common as to cause the frequent interruption of justice. This admitted, the remedy ought to follow as a matter of course. We are to get the best evidence for establishing truth,—not the best evidence *we can imagine*, but the best evidence *we can procure*; and if you cannot get oath, you must put up with affirmation, as far better than no evidence at all. But one is ashamed to descant upon such obvious truths.

One obvious truth however I have always great pleasure in descanting upon; and that is, that I always see the Chief Justice leading the way in everything that is brave, liberal, and wise; and I beg he will accept my best wishes and kind regards.

SYDNEY SMITH.

486.] To Mrs. ——.

Combe Florey, Oct. 13th, 1842.

My dear Mrs. ——,

You lie heavy upon my conscience, unaccustomed to bear any weight at all. What can a country parson say to a travelled and travelling lady, who neither knows nor cares anything for wheat, oats, and barley? It is this reflection which keeps me silent. Still she has a fine heart, and likes to be cared for, even by me.

Mrs. Sydney and I are in tolerable health,—both better than we were when you lived in England; but there is much more of us, so that you will find you were only half acquainted with us! I wish I could add that the intellectual faculties had expanded in proportion to the augmentation of flesh and blood.

Have you any chance of coming home? or rather, I should say, have we any chance of seeing you at home? I have been living for three months quite alone here. I am nearly seventy-two, and I confess myself afraid of the very disagreeable methods by which we leave this world; the long death of palsy, or the degraded spectacle of aged idiotism. As for the *pleasures* of the world,—it is a very ordinary, middling sort of place. Pray be my tombstone, and say a good word for me when I am dead! I shall think of my beautiful monument when I am going; but I wish I could see it before I die. God bless you!

Sydney Smith.

487.] To the Countess Grey.

Green-street, November, 1842.

There are plenty of people in London, dear Lady

Grey, as there always are. I am leading a life almost as riotous as in the middle of June. Have you read Macaulay's 'Lays'? They are very much liked. I have read some of them, but I abhor all Grecian and Roman subjects.

There are no Whigs to be seen. There are descriptions of them; but they are a lost variety of the species, like the dodo or sea-cow.

I am just recovered from a fit of the gout, but am quite well,—enjoying life, and ready for death!

Kind regards to my Lord, and to Georgiana, the honest and the true; and much affection from your old friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

488.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

November 6th, 1842.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have not the heart, when an amiable lady says, "Come to 'Semiramis' in my box," to decline; but I get bolder at a distance. 'Semiramis' would be to me pure misery. I love music very little,—I hate acting; I have the worst opinion of Semiramis herself, and the whole thing (I cannot help it) seems so childish and so foolish that I cannot abide it. Moreover, it would be rather out of etiquette for a Canon of St. Paul's to go to an opera; and where etiquette prevents me from doing things disagreeable to myself, I am a perfect martinet.

All these things considered, I am sure you will not be a Semiramis to me, but let me off.

SYDNEY SMITH.

489.] To Miss Berry.

November, 1842.

Where is Tittenhanger?
Is it near Bangor?
Is it in Scotland,
Or a more flat land?
Is it in Wales,
Or near Versailles?
Tell me, in the name of grace,
Why you go to such a place?
I do not know in what map to look,
And I can't find it in the Road-book.
I always feel so sad and undone,
When you and Agnes go from London.
Your loving friend and plump divine
Accepts your kind commands to dine.
I will be certain to remember
The fifteenth day of this November.
There is a young Prince
Two days since——
But for fear I should be a bore,
I won't write you any more;
Indeed I 've nothing else to tell,
But that Monckton Milnes is well.

Sydney Smith.

490.] To Lady Bell.

56, *Green-street, Grosvenor-square,*
Nov. 26th, 1842.

My dear Lady Bell,

What has a clergyman to offer but sermons? Look over this,* and if you like it, copy it, and return it here before the 6th of December. They are

* This Sermon was published after Mr. Sydney Smith's death. "We are perplexed, but not in despair," etc.

common arguments, but I know no other;—and attribute what I send not to vanity, but kindness,—for your state affected me very much. I will call upon you very soon. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

491.] To MRS. HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, December, 1842.

My dear Saba,

Your three eldest children will each receive a copy* from me. I had intended to send them before your letter came; therefore submit with a good grace, and do not oppose your papa.

Ever your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

492.] To THE COUNTESS GREY.

December 21*st*, 1842.

Dear Lady Grey,

I am quite delighted with the railroad. I came down in the public carriages without any fatigue, and I could have gone to the poles or the equator without stopping. Distance is abolished,—scratch that out of the catalogue of human evils.

Luckily, serious quarrels have broken out here, and everybody is challenging everybody. This is something to talk about. I study the question deeply, whether the Clerk of the Peace is to fight a certain captain whose name is *Mars*. These quarrels produce a wholesome agitation of the air, and disturb the serious apoplexy of a country life.

* Of the writer's Works.

I have just read young Philips's review of Alison, and think it very good. It is well expressed, and the censure is conveyed in a much more gentle manner than characterizes the Edinburgh Review, or than did characterize it, when I had anything to do with it. I am not sure that it is not every now and then languid and feeble, and certainly it has the universal fault of being a great deal too long. What is required in a review? As much knowledge and information upon any one subject as can be condensed into eight or ten pages. You must not bring me a loaf when I ask for a crust, or a joint of meat when I petition for a sandwich.

The weather is here, as it seems to be everywhere, perfectly delightful. Even in Scotland they pretend it is fine; but they are not to be believed on their oath, where the climate of Scotland is concerned.

Did you ever read 'Le Père Goriot,' by Balzac, or 'La Messe de l'Athée'? They are very good, and perfectly readable for ladies and gentlemen.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

493.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

January 6th, 1843.

My dear Sir,

You have been so used to these sort of impertinences, that I believe you will excuse me for saying how very much I am pleased with the first number of your new work. Pecksniff and his daughters, and Pinch, are admirable,—quite first-rate painting, such as no one but yourself can execute.

I did not like your genealogy of the Chuzzlewits, and I must wait a little to see how Martin turns out; I am impatient for the next number.

Pray come and see me next summer; and believe me ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Chuffey is admirable. I never read a finer piece of writing; it is deeply pathetic and affecting. Your last number is excellent. Don't give yourself the trouble to answer my impertinent eulogies, only excuse them. Ever yours,

S. S.

494.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Jan. 16th, 1843.

My dear Lady Holland,

I exempt you from a regular and punctual system of answers to my nonsense. I find it almost impossible to read your handwriting; but knowing it always contains some proffer of kindness and hospitality to me, I answer upon general principles and conjecture.

Have you any objection to take a few lessons of writing from me in my morning calls? I could bring you on very much in the course of next summer; and if you take pains, I will show your book to Lady Cowper. I behaved very generously to Bobus in letting him off from coming here; he promises to come next summer, but such is my good-nature, that I think he will try to escape. Bowood is, I believe, his only exception to the love of solitude.

We are in a snow-storm; but with a warm house and noisy grandchildren, I defy the weather. I wish

for nothing out of the house but the continuance of your kindness and affection.

SYDNEY SMITH.

495.] To MISS BERRY.

Combe Florey, Jan. 28th, 1843.

Are you well? Answer me that, and I am answered. I question everybody who comes from Curzon-street, and the answers I get are so various, that I must look into the matter myself. Who comes to see you? or rather, who does not come to see you? Who are the wise, the fair, the witty, who absent themselves from your parties, and still preserve their character for beauty, for wisdom, and for wit? I have been hybernating in my den, but begin to scent the approach of Spring, and to hear the hum of the Metropolis, proposing to be there the 22nd of February.

Poor ——! the model of all human prosperity! He seems to have been killed, as an animal is killed, for his plumpness. What other motive could there be? Or was it to liberate him from the ——? to terminate the frigid friendship, and to guard the —— from that heavy pleasantry with which, in moments of relaxation, —— is apt to overwhelm his dependants? I say, moments of relaxation; because this unbending posture of mind is never observed in him for more than a few seconds.

Mankind looked on with critical curiosity when Lady Holland dined with you; only general results reached me here; it would have been conducted, I am sure, with the greatest learning and skill on both sides.

Ah! if Providence would but give us more Boswells! But your house deserves a private Boswell; think of one. Whom will you choose? I am too old, and too absent,—absent, I mean, in body.

I am studying the death of Louis XVI. Did he die heroically? or did he struggle on the scaffold? Was that struggle (for I believe there was one) for permission to speak? or from indignation at not being suffered to act for himself at the last moment, and to place himself under the axe? Make this out for me, if you please, and speak of it to me when I come to London. I don't believe the Abbé Edgeworth's "Son of St. Louis, *montez au ciel!*" It seems necessary that great people should die with some sonorous and quotable saying. Mr. Pitt said something not intelligible in his last moments: G. Rose made it out to be, "Save my country, Heaven!" The nurse, on being interrogated, said that he asked for barley-water.

I have seen nobody since I saw you, but persons in orders. My only varieties are vicars, rectors, curates, and every now and then (by way of turbot) an archdeacon. There is nobody in the country but parsons. Remember, you gave me your honour and word that I should find you both in good health in February. Upon the faith of this promise I gave, and now give, you my benediction.

SYDNEY SMITH.

496.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green-street, Feb. 28th, 1843.

My dear Lady Grey,

Bulteel has stated his case to me, and I have given

him my advice upon it. Has a bishop a right to make a condition of ordination, that which the law does not make a condition,—that no man shall be ordained who has not taken an English degree? Suppose he were to say that no man should be ordained who travels on the continent, or who has studied the Italian language, or who is not six feet high. Where does power end? How does he prove that the tutor knew this rule? What right has he to say, that a man (even knowing it) may not go to be ordained when he chooses?—and fifty other questions to which the case gives birth.

SYDNEY SMITH.

497.] To RODERICK MURCHISON, ESQ.

Green-street, March 10th, 1843.

Dear Murchison,

Many thanks for your address, which I will diligently read. May there not be some one among the infinite worlds where men and women are all made of stone? Perhaps of Parian marble? How infinitely superior to flesh and blood! What a Paradise for you, to pass eternity with a greywacke woman!

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P. S.—Very good indeed! The model of an address from a scientific man to practical men! Great zeal, and an earnest desire to make others zealous.

The style and language just what they ought to be. No lapses, no indiscretions. The only expression I quarrel with is, monograph; either it has some con-

ventional meaning among geologists, or it only means a pamphlet,—a book.

498.] To Miss G. Harcourt.

Green-street, March 29th, 1843.

My dear Georgiana,

Was there ever such stupid trash as these humorous songs? If there is anything on earth makes me melancholy, it is a humorous song. Still I glory in the Widow E——, and am infinitely pleased with her good sense and the gentleness of her nature.

I did not think you were recovered at Mr. Grenville's, but I thought you better at Belgrave-square. I took a medical survey of you, unobserved by you.

Always, dear Georgiana, your affectionate friend,

Sydney Smith.

Note to Miss G. Harcourt.

My dear G.,
The pain in my knee
Would not suffer me
To drink your bohea.
I can laugh and talk,
But I cannot walk;
And I thought His Grace would stare
If I put my leg on a chair.
And to give the knee its former power,
It must be fomented for half an hour;
And in this very disagreeable state,
If I had come at all, I should have been too late.

499.] To Dr. Whewell.

April 8th, 1843.

My dear Sir,

My lectures are gone to the dogs, and are utterly forgotten. I knew nothing of moral philosophy, but I was thoroughly aware that I wanted £200 to furnish my house. The success, however, was prodigious; all Albemarle-street blocked up with carriages, and such an uproar as I never remember to have been excited by any other literary imposture. Every week I had a new theory about conception and perception; and supported by a natural manner, a torrent of words, and an impudence scarcely credible in this prudent age. Still, in justice to myself, I must say there were some good things in them. But good and bad are all gone. By 'moral philosophy' you mean, as they mean at Edinburgh, mental philosophy; *i. e.* the faculties of the mind, and the effects which our reasoning powers and our passions produce upon the actions of our lives.

I think the University uses you and us very ill, in keeping you so strictly at Cambridge. If Jupiter could desert Olympus for twelve days to feast with the harmless Ethiopians, why may not the Vice-Chancellor commit the graduating, matriculating world for a little time to the inferior deities, and thunder and lighten at the tables of the Metropolis?

I hope you like Horner's 'Life.' It succeeds extremely well here. It is full of all the exorbitant and impracticable views so natural to very young men at Edinburgh; but there is great order, great love of knowledge, high principle and feelings, which ought to grow and thrive in superior minds.

Our kind regards to Mrs. Whewell. Ever, my dear Sir, sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

500.] To RODERICK MURCHISON, ESQ.

Green-street, April 29th, 1843.

Dear Murchison,

I am very much obliged to you for your book, which I shall read, though I shall not understand it; not from your want of light, but from my want of vision. I rejoice in your reputation; I know your industry and enterprise, and am always truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

501.] To MISS BERRY.

June.

Dear Berries,

I dine on Saturday with the good Widow T——, and blush to say that I have no disposable day before the 26th; by which time you will, I presume, be plucking gooseberries in the suburban regions of Richmond. But think not, O Berries! that that distance, or any other, of latitude or longitude, shall prevent me from following you, plucking you, and eating you. Whatever pleasure men find in the raspberry, in the strawberry, in the coffee-berry, all these pleasures are to my taste concentrated in the May-Fair Berries. Ever theirs,

SYDNEY SMITH.

502.] To JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Green-street, June 4th, 1843.

My dear Murray,

I should be glad to hear something of your life and adventures, and the more particularly so, as I learn you have no intention of leaving Edinburgh for London this season.

Mrs. Sydney and I have been remarkably well, and are so at present; why, I cannot tell. I am getting very old in years, but do not feel that I am become so in constitution. My locomotive powers at seventy-three are abridged, but my animal spirits do not desert me. I am become rich. My youngest brother died suddenly, leaving behind him £100,000 and no will. A third of this therefore fell to my share, and puts me at my ease for my few remaining years. After buying into the Consols and the Reduced, I read Seneca 'On the Contempt of Wealth!' What intolerable nonsense! I heard your *éloge* from Lord Lansdowne when I dined with him, and I need not say how heartily I concurred in it. Next to me sat Lord Worsley, whose enclosed letter affected me, and very much pleased me. I answered it with sincere warmth. Pray return me the paper. Did you read my American Petition, and did you approve it?

Why don't they talk over the virtues and excellencies of Lansdowne? There is no man who performs the duties of life better, or fills a high station in a more becoming manner. He is full of knowledge, and eager for its acquisition. His remarkable polite-

ness is the result of good-nature, regulated by good sense. He looks for talents and qualities among all ranks of men, and adds them to his stock of society, as a botanist does his plants; and while other aristocrats are yawning among Stars and Garters, Lansdowne is refreshing his soul with the fancy and genius which he has found in odd places, and gathered to the marbles and pictures of his palace. Then he is an honest politician, a wise statesman, and has a philosophic mind; he is very agreeable in conversation, and is a man of an unblemished life. I shall take care of him in my Memoirs!

Remember me very kindly to the *maximus minimus*,* and to the Scotch Church. I have urged my friend the Bishop of Durham to prepare kettles of soup for the seceders, who will probably be wandering in troops over our northern counties.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

503.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

56, *Green-street*, *July* 1*st*, 1843.

Dear Dickens,

Excellent! nothing can be better! You must settle it with the Americans as you can, but I have nothing to do with that. I have only to certify that the number is full of wit, humour, and power of description.

I am slowly recovering from an attack of gout in the knee, and am very sorry to have missed you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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* Lord Jeffrey.

504.] To Lord Mahon.

July 4th, 1843.

My dear Lord Mahon,

I am only half recovered from a violent attack of gout in the knee, and I could not bear the confinement of dinner, without getting up and walking between the courses, or thrusting my foot on somebody else's chair, like the Archbishop of Dublin. For these reasons, I have been forced for some time, and am still forced, to decline dinner engagements. I should, in a sounder state, have had great pleasure in accepting the very agreeable party you are kind enough to propose to me; but I shall avail myself, in the next campaign, of your kindness. I consider myself as well acquainted with Lady Mahon and yourself, and shall hope to see you here, as well as elsewhere. Pray present my benediction to your charming wife, who I am sure would bring any plant in the garden into full flower by looking at it, and smiling upon it. Try the experiment from mere curiosity. Ever yours,

Sydney Smith.

505.] To Mrs. Grote.

Combe Florey, July 17th, 1843.

I have been sadly tormented with the gout in my knee. I had made great progress; but at the Archbishop's I walked too much, and the gout came back.

My place looks very beautiful, and I really enjoy the change. We were very sorry not to see you the evening you were to come to us; but the temptation not to come, where you have engaged to come, is more than you can resist: try refusing, and see what that

will do! Mr. Grote was very agreeable and sensible, as he always is. I met Brunel at the Archbishop's, and found him a very lively and intelligent man. He said that when he coughed up the piece of gold, the two surgeons, the apothecary, and physician all joined hands, and danced round the room for ten minutes, without taking the least notice of his convulsed and half-strangled state. I admire this very much.

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

506.] TO HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Combe Florey, July 20th; 1843.

Monseigneur,

I have taken the liberty to send your Grace the half of a Cheddar cheese. It is directed to you, at Nuneham Steventon. You will be glad to hear my knee is better a good deal. I have written two letters to the Reverend Leibnitz Newton Lavoisier W—— H——, to know when he means to come here, and can get no answer. There must be something wrong at the Poles or the Equator, or in the Milky Way. Pray jog him.

I am learning to sing some of Moore's songs, which I think I shall do to great perfection. I found here everything very comfortable and very beautiful; as I left everything, though in a very superior degree, at Nuncham.

I beg my kind regards to dear Georgiana, and remain, my dear Lord, with affection and respect, always yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

507.] To Mrs. Meynell.

Combe Florey, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,

Let me, if you please, have a word or two from you, to tell me of your new habitation. Saba seems to have been delighted with her visit. I see —— has been with you. How did you like her? To me she is agreeable, civil, and elegant, and by no means insipid. She has a kind of ready-money smile, and a three-per-cent. affability, which make her interesting.

We have been leading a very solitary life here. Hardly a soul has been here, but I am contented, as I value more every day the pleasures of indolence; and there is this difference between a large inn like Temple Newsam and a small public-house like Combe Florey, that you hold a numerous society, who make themselves to a certain degree independent of you, and do not weigh upon you; whereas, as I hold only two or three, the social weight is upon me. Luttrell is staying here. Nothing can exceed the innocence of our conversation. It is one continued eulogy upon man-and-woman-kind. You would suppose that two Arcadian old gentlemen, after shearing their flocks, had agreed to spend a week together upon curds and cream, and to indulge in gentleness of speech and softness of mind.

We have had a superb summer, but I am glad it is over; I am never happy till the fires are lighted. Where is your house in London? You cannot but buy one: it is absolutely impossible for Temple Newsam not to have a London establishment. God bless you, dear G.! Keep a little love for your old friend,

Sydney Smith.

508.] To Sir George Philips, Bart.

56, *Green-street, Aug. 19th*, 1843.

My dear Philips,

I still believe in the return of business to Manchester, because I believe in the efficiency of capital, coals and priority of skill, and cannot think that these advantages can be so soon eclipsed. How can the cotton trade be lessened, if the import of the raw article continues every three years to increase? If the demand remains the same, or nearly the same, and a mill, from the improvements of machinery, can do three times the work it used to do, of course two-thirds of the mills must be put down; and this apparent stagnation is considered a proof of the diminution of the trade, whereas it is evidence of its healthy state and its increase.

We have had little Tommy Moore here, who seemed very much pleased with his visit. Mrs. Holland and her five children are here.

I cannot make out the Spanish revolution. I thought Espartero honest, brave, and to be well understood and esteemed by the Spanish people; but they all rise up with one accord, and kick him into that refuge of expelled monarchs—a British man-of-war.

I think the Conservatives begin to feel that Sir Robert Peel is a little damaged; still I should be sorry to see him out: he knows how to disguise liberal ideas, and to make them less terrible to the Foolery of a country. The Whigs delight to shock and affront, and to make their enemies ashamed that such a measure has not been carried out before. I am glad your journey is about to be shortened to London: the

rail has been invaluable here,—it has brought us within fifty miles of London. The danger is of becoming, from our proximity to the railroad, too much in fashion; but I have a steady confidence in my own bad qualities. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

509.] To MRS. GROTE.

Combe Florey, Aug. 31st, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Grote,

We shall be extremely glad to see Grote and you. I have not received the 'Morning Post' you sent me, but I perceive, in other papers, my squib has burst, and caused some consternation.

I find I am getting old, and that my bodily feelings agree very well with the parish register. You seem to have had a very amusing life, with singing and dancing; but you cannot excite my envy by all the descriptions of your dramas and melodramas; you may as well paint the luxuries of barley-meal to a tiger, or turn a leopard into a field of clover. All this class of pleasures inspires me with the same nausea as I feel at the sight of rich plum-cake or sweetmeats; I prefer the driest bread of common life. I am in no degree answering your taste, but stating my own.

I wish Mrs. —— would make us a visit here; she is so good-natured and amiable, that we should be really very glad to see her.

In coming here, you come to old-age, and stupidity connected with old-age; I have no recommendation to

offer you, but a beautiful country and an affectionate welcome.

Peel seems to be a little damaged; it may be that Ireland cannot be governed by Tories. Three-fourths of the quarrels of England seem to be about established churches. Dr. Holland is just come from Ireland with a diminished sense of the danger of the Repeal cry. My house is, as I tell my daughter, as full of Hollands as a gin-shop.

I have a letter from Ticknor, of Boston, who thinks the Pennsylvanians will pay; but I tell him when once a people have tasted the luxury of not paying their debts, it is impossible to bring them back to the black broth of honesty. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—The 'Morning Post' is arrived. The author of the letter is Ticknor, Professor at Boston; it is honourable to me; but he magnifies my literary gains, and I much doubt if I have ever gained £1500 by my literary labours in the course of my life.

510.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 3rd, 1843.

Don't attempt to teach Sir —— —— the Northumberland method of farming. He cares for nothing but Piccadilly and the hospitals, and Lady ——, and is miserable out of London. In coming home last week from a dinner-party, our carriage was stopped; and as I was preparing my watch and money, a man put his head into the window, and said, "We want Dr. Holland." They took him out, and we have heard nothing of him since; we think of advertising.

I am thinking of going for a week or ten days to Ilfracombe. My only difficulty is to find out whether I like to go. I am very fond of a short visit to the sea, but the comforts of home become every day more important to old people; a bad bed, a cold room, a smoky grate,—these are the prices always paid for excursions. Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

511.] TO LADY DUFFERIN.

Combe Florey: no date.

I am just beginning to get well from that fit of gout, at the beginning of which you were charitable enough to pay me a visit, and I said—the same Providence which inflicts gout creates Dufferins! We must take the good and the evils of life.

I am charmed, I confess, with the beauty of this country. I hope some day you will be charmed with it too. It banished, however, every Arcadian notion to see —— walk in at the gate today. I seemed to be transported instantly to Piccadilly, and the innocence went out of me.

I hope the process of furnishing goes on well. Attend, I pray you, to the proper selection of an easy chair, where you may cast yourself down in the weariness and distresses of life, with the absolute certainty that every joint of the human frame will receive all the comfort which can be derived from easy position and soft materials; then the glass, on which your eyes are so often fixed, knowing that you have the great duty imposed on the Sheridans, of looking well. You

may depend upon it, happiness depends mainly on these little things.

I hope you remain in perfect favour with Rogers, and that you are not omitted in any of the dress breakfast parties. Remember me to the Norton: tell her I am glad to be sheltered from her beauty by the insensibility of age; that I shall not live to see its decay, but die with that unfaded image before my eyes: but don't make a mistake, and deliver the message to ——, instead of your sister.

I remain, dear Lady Dufferin, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

An Enclosure.

September 22nd.

I am very much mortified that Lady Dufferin does not answer my letter. She has gone to Germany—she is sick—she has married Rogers—she . . . . In short, all sorts of melancholy explanations came across me, till I found that the probable reason of her not answering my letter was, that she had not received it. I was strengthened in this belief from finding in my writing-desk the letter itself, which was written a month ago, and I conceived it to have been despatched the same day. I can write nothing better, for I can only repeat my admiration and regard.

SYDNEY SMITH.

512.] To MISS BERRY.

Combe Florey: supposed 1843.

I am reading again Madame du Deffand. God forbid I should be as much in love with anybody

(yourself excepted) as the poor woman was with Horace Walpole! Did I ever write to you before on this paper? It is called in the shops *criminal blush demy*. There is an *innocent blush demy*, which is cheaper.

I see some serious evil has befallen Ferguson of Raith. I lament it for your sake and for the general good, as he is an excellent person.

The smell of war is not over. I lament, and can conceive no greater misery. Among other evils, everybody must be ready for fighting; and I am not ready, but much the contrary. I am ten miles from the coast; a French steamer arrives in the night, and the first thing I hear in the morning is that the cushions of my pulpit are taken away, and my curate and churchwardens carried into captivity.

I was sorry to be forced to give —— such a beating, but he was very saucy and deserved it; however, now the battle is over, and I hope to live in good humour with all the world for the rest of my life, and to bury the war hatchet. I am glad to hear such excellent accounts of your health. Live as long as you can; nobody will be more missed. Give my love, if you please, to Agnes and Lady Charlotte. If you return, all of you, in good health to London, I will speak to Milnes, and have a poem written in praise of Richmond.

SYDNEY SMITH.

513.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1843.

My dear Lady Grey,

How is Lord Grey going on? I conjecture that

what I read in the papers is true, and that your patient has really benefited by the gout, for such is the common order or sequence of medical events.

Suppose O'Connell to have used language violently seditious, that there is clear proof of it, and that it is possible to obtain anything like a fair trial, I think the Ministers have acted properly. The question is worth a battle or two; and, if the battle is to be fought (I mean the physical battle), it had better be at the time we choose, rather than at the time he chooses. We have no foreign war now; there is a good harvest, and an improving trade. I don't think it a bad time for taking O'Connell by the beard, and then, the next Parliament, pay the Catholic clergy.

My prediction is, that Peel will be driven out by the concessions to be made to Ireland, and that it will fall to Lord John to destroy the absurd Protestant Church in that kingdom. It will hardly do to pay the priests; the thing is gone beyond that now. You must remove the flockless pastors, or the payment of the priesthood will be useless.

I think the Duke quite wrong about the sites for the new churches. I should feel very disaffected against inequality of possession, if I could not get a place for my altar. I am almost for compelling the landed possessor, under the verdict of an appraising jury, to sell me land for such purposes. I become irritable at this oppression. I think Lord Grey and you will catch the kindred flame.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

514.] To Lord Murray.

Combe Florey, Sept. 29th, 1843.

My dear Murray,

Jeffrey has written to me to say he means to dedicate his Essays to me. This I think a very great honour, and it pleases me very much. I am sure he ought to resign. He has very feeble health; a mild climate would suit the state of his throat. Mrs. Jeffrey thinks he could not employ himself. Wives know a great deal about husbands; but, if she is right, I should be surprised. I have thought he had a canine appetite for books, though this sometimes declines in the decline of life. I am beautifying my house in Green-street; a comfortable house is a great source of happiness. It ranks immediately after health and a good conscience. I see your religious war is begun in Scotland. I suppose Jeffrey will be at the head of the Free Church troops. Do you think he has any military talents?

You are, I hear, attending more to diet than heretofore. If you wish for anything like happiness in the fifth act of life, eat and drink about one-half what you *could* eat and drink. Did I ever tell you my calculation about eating and drinking? Having ascertained the weight of what I could live upon, so as to preserve health and strength, and what I did live upon, I found that, between ten and seventy years of age, I had eaten and drunk forty four-horse waggon-loads of meat and drink more than would have preserved me in life and health! The value of this mass of nourishment I considered to be worth seven thousand pounds sterling. It occurred to me that I must, by my vo-

racity, have starved to death fully a hundred persons. This is a frightful calculation, but irresistibly true; and I think, dear Murray, your waggons would require an additional horse each!

Lord and Lady Lansdowne, who are rambling about this fine country, are to spend a day here next week. You must really come to see the West of England. From Combe Florey we will go together to Linton and Lynmouth, than which there is nothing finer in this island. Two of our acquaintance dead this week, —Stewart Mackenzie and Bell! We must close our ranks. God bless you, my dear Murray!

SYDNEY SMITH.

515.] TO THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

[Inserted with the permission of the Bishop of London.]

Fulham, Oct. 31*st*, 1843.

My dear Sir,

I have been very much occupied during the last week, or I should have written to you before, to express the great pleasure which I have received from the intelligence of your kind and generous intentions towards young Mr. Tate. It is a substantial proof of your regard for his father, and I really believe well deserved by the young man himself, who has been an active and useful curate of the parish which is now placed in his charge as vicar.

This arrangement will be most cheering and consolatory to poor Mrs. Tate.*

I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

C. J. LONDON.

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* See Memoir, p. 293.

516.] To R. Monckton Milnes, Esq.

Green-street, Nov. 8th, 1843.

My dear Sir,

I am glad the business is in such good hands; it is the important measure of the day. As to any share I may take in it, it must depend upon my foot, ankle, and knee. If the Americans will not book up, they must take the consequences.

I am just going to pray for you at St. Paul's, but with no very lively hope of success.

Sydney Smith.

517.] To Lord Murray.

56, *Green-street, Nov. 9th*, 1843.

My dear Murray,

I am afraid there is little chance of your coming so far as Combe Florey, but, if that could be done, it would give us sincere pleasure to show Mrs. Murray and yourself our very pretty country; in the meantime I shall look forward to the more probable chance of seeing you here.

Jeffrey's legs have as little to support as any legs in the island; I cannot see why they should be out of order. I am delighted to find his general health so good. He is about to dedicate his Reviews to me. I said (what I sincerely felt) that I considered it as the greatest compliment ever paid to me. I shall be obliged to you for the herrings, and tell me, at the same time, how to dress them; but perhaps I mistake, and they are to be eaten naked.

Your exhortation comes too late. My letter in the 'Chronicle' was published before yours to me arrived.

It is generally found fault with, as being too favourable, and to this I plead guilty; but I find I get more mild as I get older, and more unwilling to be severe. But if they do not (in business phrase) 'book up' by Christmas, I shall set at them in good earnest. I have no sort of belief that they will ever pay, and I mean this week to sell out, I hope and believe at 61, five per cent. stock. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

518.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

Dogmersfield Park, Dec. 3rd, 1843.

Many thanks, dear Lady Ashburton; but on the 7th I must be at Combe Florey, and remain there till my emersion in February. I return to London on Monday, and depart again for home immediately. All joking apart,—the real impediment to making visits is, that derangeable health which belongs to old-age. I am never well when I arrive at a new house. The bread, the water, the hours, the bed, the change of bolster,—everything puts me out. I recover in two or three days, and then it is time to depart. This made the wise man say, that a man should give over arguing at thirty, riding at sixty, and visiting at seventy.

I am truly sorry you are not well. I consider Lord Ashburton and you as good friends, and I rejoice in your rejoicing, and am sorry for the ills which happen to you. I agree with you that —— is in the high road to Puseyism, and that —— is the postboy who is driving her there. She does not mind in the least what I say to her, and calls me a priest of Baal.

Pray give my kind regards to the Plenipotentiary;

first taking the necessary precaution to state where I live, my profession, age, or anything that will awaken in him a recollection that he has seen me before. Ever, dear Lady Ashburton, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

519.] TO LORD MURRAY.

Green-street, Dec. 4th, 1843.

I have just read an admirable review of Senior's upon Ireland, for the next Edinburgh Review. Nothing can be wiser or better; at the same time, how can any two enlightened persons differ upon such a subject?

Pray do not put off coming to town next year, or, at least, coming to Combe Florey; for I am afraid I cannot put off dying much longer;—not that I am ill, but old. I am very glad you like my American Letters. The question is, will they make them angry or honest,—or both? I did not however mean to say what would make them pay, but to show them that their conduct had been shameful in not paying before, and should leave upon them this feeling, whether they ultimately paid or not.

Tell William Murray, with my kindest regards, to get for you, when he comes to town, a book called 'Arabiniana, or Remains of Mr. Serjeant Arabin,'—very witty and humorous. It is given away—not sold, but I have in vain endeavoured to get a copy.

SYDNEY SMITH.

520.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Taunton, Dec. 10th, 1843.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you were amused with my attack upon the Americans. They really deserved it. It is a monstrous and increasing villany. Fancy a meeting in Philadelphia, convened by public advertisement, where they came to resolutions that the debt was too great for the people to pay, that the people could not pay it, and ought not to pay it! I have not a conception that the creditors will ever have a single shilling.

Tell Lord Grey I recommend to his attention, in the forthcoming Edinburgh Review, an article upon Ireland by Senior, the Master in Chancery, which I think admirable; it contains, in my humble estimation, an enumeration of the medicines, and a statement of the treatment, necessary for your distracted country; in defence of which I always state that it has at least produced Lady Grey.

I keep my health tolerably well: occasionally fits of gout, but my eyes are in good preservation; and while I can read and can write, I have no care about age. I should add another condition,—that I must have no pain. I am reading the Letters to George Selwyn, by which I am amused. Many of them are written with wit and spirit; they bring before me people of whom I know a little; and the notes are so copious, that the book makes a history of those times; certainly, a history of the manners and mode of life of the upper orders of society.

Remember me very kindly and affectionately to my

friend and patron Lord Grey, and believe me as affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

521.] TO LORD MURRAY.

Combe Florey, Dec. 17th, 1843.

My dear Murray,

Nothing can be better than the grouse; they arrived in perfect preservation, and gave great satisfaction. Lady —— is staying here. She seems to be a very sensible and very worthy person. I must do her the justice to say that when my jokes are explained to her, and she has leisure to reflect upon them, she laughs very heartily.

I am glad you like my American Letters. I see the rebound has taken place, and all the papers combine in abusing me. My firm opinion is, that they will never pay. The Legislature dares not impose the tax, —the people would never pay it. I shall not be unobservant of what is said in the American papers, and, if needs be, address a few more last words to Jonathan.

Be sure that you keep to your plan of coming to England at Easter, to be fresh dyed. Depend upon it, it will do you good.

SYDNEY SMITH.

522.] TO MRS. GROTE.

December 18th, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Grote,

I hope the Irish fossils have reached you by this time, and that they are approved of.

My bomb has fallen very successfully in America, and the list of killed and wounded is extensive. I have several quires of paper sent me every day, calling me monster, thief, atheist, deist, etc. Duff Green sent me three pounds of cheese, and a Captain Monigan a large barrel of American apples. The last news from America will, I think, lower the Pennsylvanian funds.

I wonder how you are occupied. I am reading Montaigne. He thinks aloud, that is his great merit, but does not think remarkably well; mankind have improved in thinking and writing since that period. Have you read Senior's article for the forthcoming Edinburgh Review? It is excellent, and does him great credit.

I went, while in town, one night to the Sartoris', where Mrs. Sartoris was singing divinely. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

523.] TO MRS. GROTE.

Combe Florey, Dec. 23rd, 1843.

Dear Mrs. Grote,

You are so energetic, that you never attend to anything in particular, but are always lost in generalities. I sent you a letter of Jeffrey's, which you have not returned. Are you satisfied that your friend Faucher was treated as well as Lord Jeffrey's health would permit?

You complain of the smallness of the potatoes: let me suggest the romantic plan of having the potatoes

picked; the large ones reserved for your table, the small ones for the pigs. It is by this ingenious and complicated process that the potatoes you get from the greengrocer in London are managed. There is no accounting for tastes. The potatoes I sent appear to me to be excellent.

You have planted seven hundred firs; the number is scarcely credible. Have you read the Swedish method of planting, under which the tree grows fourteen feet in one year? It consists in burying half a pound of tallow candles with every fir planted. I cannot believe it; but it is difficult to disbelieve what is published in a grave work.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

524.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 28th, 1843.

My dear Philips,

I am going to Bowood for five or six days next week. I shall find Bobus there, who will come on from thence here. He is very blind, but bears up against the evils of age heroically. The great question of the next Session will be the support of the Catholic clergy. Will Peel dare to bring it on? Will he be able to carry it in and out of the House, if he does? Longman has printed my American Letters in the shape of a small pamphlet, and it has a very great circulation. I receive presents of cheese and apples from Americans who are advocates for paying debts, and very abusive letters in print and in manuscript

from those who are not. I continue to think the Pennsylvanians will not pay; and so thinks, as I hear, Jones Lloyd.

Your old and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

525.] To MRS. HOLLAND.

December, 1843.

My dear Saba,

I will bear in mind the name and misfortunes of Mr. B., and if any opportunity occurs, will endeavour to make myself useful to him; but, as you may suppose, I am up to the ears in clergymen. Your mother sent you the flaming panegyric of me in the 'Morning Chronicle' (and sent it at my desire, because I am sure it would give you pleasure, as I see you have an honest pride in the praises of your father); whether right or wrong others must determine, if any one thinks about it; but I should really deserve some praise if I could write as well as my eulogist.

Your mother and I mean to have a twelfth-cake, and draw kings and queens alone. Pray desire G. Hibbert to let us know whether and when he will come, and don't forget this message. Many thanks for your kindness in getting Charlotte Loch* a place; the misfortune of the poor girl is that she has not been taught millinery and mantuamaking. Give my love to all your party; and believe me,

Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

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* One of his parishioners, about whom he was interested.

526.] To Mrs. Holland.

Combe Florey, December.

My dearest Daughter,

Many pardons for not having written to you according to promise; but the calf and the kitchen-maid both kept their beds, George Strong had quinsy, and the shafts were broken. I had a very agreeable journey down, going in the public carriages,—an infinitely more agreeable method than in a private vehicle. I felt as little fatigue as in my arm-chair in this library, and could have gone on to the world's end without being tired.

The whole country is divided between the Clerk of the Peace and Captain Mars, who has challenged him. Mars, the God of War, challenging the Clerk of the Peace! I am studying the question deeply, as is Cecil.

Not a breath of wind; a solemn stillness; all nature fast asleep; Storm and Tempest bound over to keep the peace! There never was such a period.

Love to Holland and the children.

Ever your affectionate father,

Sydney Smith.

527.] To his Grandchild.

On sending him a Letter over weight.

Oh, you little wretch! your letter cost me fourpence. I will pull all the plums out of your puddings; I will undress your dolls and steal their under petticoats; you shall have no currant-jelly to your rice; I will kiss you till you cannot see out of your eyes; when no-

body else whips you, I will do so; I will fill you so full of sugar-plums that they shall run out of your nose and ears; lastly, your frocks shall be so short that they shall not come below your knees.

Your loving grandfather,

SYDNEY SMITH.

528.] To MISS BERRY.

1843.

I hope, my dear friend, you are well. I met the lofty P—— on the railroad, and he gave me some account of you, but not enough for my ravenous desire of your welfare. Oh, happy woman! the suburban beauties of Richmond were not enough; but Providence sent you ——, a woman of piety and ancient faith; and the *preux chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche!*

Mrs. Sydney and I are tolerably well. The diminished temperature has restored my locomotive powers, such as they are; but in the dog-days I could not move.

We have had Tommy Moore and Lady Morley, and a few more unknown to fame. Dr. Holland has just made a rush from Combe Florey to Jerusalem. By the bye, I saw a piece of news the other day, in which a gentleman made his good fortune known to the world in the public papers. "Last week the Rev. Elias Johnson was made Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Jerusalem!" I should like to know what his questions are to the candidates.

I presume you have never been a day without crowds. Has the Davy glittered at Richmond? By deaths and

marriages the world is thinned since we met. My kindest regards to Lady Charlotte, to both of you, and those of Mrs. Sydney. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

529.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.*

No date.

Dear Lady Morley,

Pray understand me rightly: I do not give the Bluecoat theory as an established fact, but as a highly probable conjecture; look at the circumstances. At a very early age young Quakers disappear, at a very early age the Coat-boys are seen; at the age of seventeen or eighteen young Quakers are again seen; at the same age, the Coat-boys disappear: who has ever heard of a Coat-man? The thing is utterly unknown in natural history. Upon what other evidence does the migration of the grub into the aurelia rest? After a certain number of days the grub is no more seen, and the aurelia flutters over his relics. That such a prominent fact should have escaped our naturalists is truly astonishing; I had long suspected it, but was afraid to come out with a speculation so bold, and now mention it as protected and sanctioned by you.

Dissection would throw great light upon the question; and if our friend —— would receive two boys into his house about the time of their changing their coats, great service would be rendered to the cause.

Our friend Lord Grey, not remarkable for his attention to natural history, was a good deal struck with the

* This letter, without date, seems to have been after a conversation given in the Narrative, page 350, where the subject is alluded to.

novelty and ingenuity of the hypothesis. I have ascertained that the young Bluecoat infants are fed with drab-coloured pap, which looks very suspicious. More hereafter on this interesting subject. Where real science is to be promoted, I will make no apology to your Ladyship for this intrusion. Yours truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

530.] FROM THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

No date.

Had I received your letter two days since, I should have said your arguments and theory were perfectly convincing, and that the most obstinate sceptic must have yielded to them; but I have come across a person in that interval who gives me information which puts us all at sea again. That the Bluecoat boy should be the larva of the Quaker in Great Britain is possible, and even probable, but we must take a wider view of the question; and here, I confess, I am bewildered by doubts and difficulties. The Bluecoat is an indigenous animal—not so the Quaker; and now be so good as to give your whole mind to the facts I have to communicate. I have seen and talked much with Sir R. Ker Porter on this interesting subject. He has travelled over the whole habitable globe, and has penetrated with a scientific and scrutinizing eye into regions hitherto unexplored by civilized man; and yet *he* has never seen a Quaker baby. He has lived for years in Philadelphia (the national nest of Quakers); he has roamed up and down Broadways and lengthways in every nook and corner of Pennsylvania; and yet he never saw a Quaker baby; and what is new and most

striking, never did he see a Quaker lady in a situation which gave hope that a Quaker baby might be seen hereafter. This is a stunning fact, and involving the question in such impenetrable mystery as will, I fear, defy even your sagacity, acuteness, and industry to elucidate. But let us not be checked and cast down; truth is the end and object of our research. Let us not bate one jot of heart and hope, but still bear up and steer our course right onward.

Yours most truly,

F. MORLEY.

531.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.*

Noble countenance, expressing quite sufficient when at rest, too much when in activity. Middling voice, provincial accent; occasional bad taste, language often very happy, with flights of mere eloquence; not the vehicle of reasoning or profound remark. Very difficult, when the sermon was over, to know what it was about; and the whole effect rather fatiguing and tiresome. Dear Lady Morley, pray tell me whether you agree with me. Most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

532.] To MRS. GROTE.

Combe Florey, Jan. 3rd, 1844.

My dear Mrs. Grote,

You have seen more than enough of my giving the living of Edmonton to a curate. The first thing the

* This was written after hearing Irving preach.

unscriptural curate does, is to turn out his fellow-curate, the son of him who was vicar before his father. Is there not some story in Scripture of the debtor who had just been excused his debt, seizing his fellow-servant by the throat, and casting him into prison? The Bishop, the Dean and Chapter, and I have in vain expostulated; he perseveres in his harshness and cruelty.

Senior has just left us; he seems to have gained great credit from his Irish article. I am always very much pleased with your commendation. I am really sincere in my love of what is honest and liberal, and I wrote with no lack of moral wrath.

I am going on Thursday to Bowood, where my brother is; he returns with me. Everett is coming here, and on the 15th the Hibberts. Mrs. Sydney is uncommonly well; I thought I was going to be very ill during the close, muggy weather, but this frost has restored me to life; and so I return to my text, by asking why you suppose your letters are not agreeable?

SYDNEY SMITH.

533.] To MRS. ——.

Combe Florey, Jan. 23rd, 1844.

Many thanks, dear Mrs. ——, for your agreeable letter. You seem to be leading a happy life; making a pleasing exception to the generality of mankind, who are miserable. —— writes to me at long intervals. I think I am falling into desuetude and disgrace.

Your list of French visitors is, I dare say, very splendid, but I am so ignorant of French society, that

they are most of them unknown to me; I mean, unknown by reputation, as well as personally. I should like more of a mixture. You seem to have too much talent in your drawing-room. I met Berryer at the Chancellor's in London, and was much struck with his physiognomy and manner.

Poor Miss Fox (as I believe you know) has had a slight paralytic stroke. She was a most beautiful specimen of human excellence. I have been in the country ever since the middle of December, and know nothing about men and things. I am tolerably well, but intolerably old.

Jeffrey is laid up with a bad leg, which is getting rather serious. Have you seen his publication in four volumes, dedicated to me? I told him it was the greatest compliment I had ever received in my life.

I receive every day letters of abuse and congratulation from America, for my three epistles. I continue to think they will never pay, and I continue to value you very much. I am very glad Mr. —— is better, and I beg you to accept my affectionate benediction.

SYDNEY SMITH.

534.] TO MRS. HOLLAND.

January, 1844.

Dear Saba,

People of wealth and rank never use ugly names for ugly things. Apoplexy is an affection of the head; paralysis is nervousness; gangrene is pain and inconvenience in the extremities. All that I heard from D——, who falls into this kind of subterfutive language, was that Miss —— was indisposed, and it was only after your letter that I got anything like the

truth from him; she is certainly in danger, and he says that he should not be surprised to hear of her death. Poor dear ——! So it is, that the best as well as the worst disappear. I am heartily sorry for the ——. Bobus and Mr. Everett are staying here. God bless you! Ever affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

535.] To MRS. HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, 1844.

My dear Saba,

Are you sure that you are sufficiently acquainted with what the strength of cider ought to be, to determine that your cider has been adulterated? The farmer has the character of being a remarkably honest man, and his reputation is at stake. Send me down here a couple of bottles, which I will compare with his cider. George Hibbert is here. Your mother has no illness, but much *malaise*. I complain of nothing but weakness, and want of nervous energy; I look as strong as a cart-horse, but I cannot get round the garden without resting once or twice, so deficient am I in nervous energy. I doubt whether to attribute this to old-age, and to consider it as inevitable, or to blame this soft, and warm, and disinvigorating climate. I believe if I were at Ramsgate or Brighton I should be strong.

I think Bobus much too adventurous for the powers of his sight; he lives in constant danger, but not fear, of a tremendous fall; and to walk, as he does, in the streets, is positive insanity. His blindness is singular: he can see a mote, but not a beam,—the smaller any-

thing is, the better he sees it; he could see David, but would run against Goliath.

We propose to be in London about the 20th, of which you may inform a fond and expecting capital. I have said nothing to your mother of the marble chimney-pieces* in the drawing-rooms; I think she will faint with joy when she sees them. God bless you, dear Saba! My kind regards to Holland.

Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

536.] To MRS. GROTE.

Combe Florey, Jan. 31st, 1844.

My dear Mrs. Grote,

Your fall entirely proceeded from your despising the pommel of the saddle,—a species of pride to which many ladies may attribute fractures and death. When I rode (which, I believe, was in the middle of the last century) I had a holding-strap fixed somewhere near the pommel, and escaped many falls by it.

Nothing ever does happen at Combe Florey, and nothing has happened.

Old-age is not so much a scene of illness as of *malaise*. I think every day how near I am to death. I am very weak, and very breathless. Everett, the American Minister, has been here at the same time with my eldest brother. We all liked him, and were confirmed in our good opinion of him. A sensible, unassuming man, always wise and reasonable.

"If I take this dose of calomel, shall I be well im-

* See Memoir, page 216.

mediately?" "Certainly not," replies the physician. "You have been in bed these six weeks; how can you expect such a sudden cure? But I can tell you you will never be well without it, and that it will tend materially to the establishment of your health." So, the pay to the Catholic Clergy. They will not be immediately satisfied by the measure, but they will never be satisfied without it, and it will have a considerable tendency to produce that effect. It will not supersede other medicines, but it is an indispensable preliminary to them.

If you dine with Lady ——, it is a sure proof that you are a virtuous woman; she collects the virtuous. I have totally forgotten all about the American debt, but I continue to receive letters and papers from the most remote corners of the United States, with every vituperative epithet which human rage has invented.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

537.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, February, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

We have read every account of Lord Carlisle, and inquired of every one who could give us any information, and have been unwilling to add to your cares and distractions by inquiries which might put you under the necessity of writing. Pray say all that is kind, and friendly, and affectionate, from this family to him. To be cared and thought about is some pleasure to the sick, even when that solicitude comes from a country parson and his wife. The danger

seems to be over; the business now is to mitigate pain, and to amuse. Mrs. Sydney is tolerably well; I cannot breathe, or walk, and am very weak; in other respects I am well also. We go to London on Tuesday, and are busy packing up ten times as many things as we shall ever want.

I beg you do not answer this note; it requires none. I only write it to say, don't imagine we are inattentive to what is passing at Castle Howard, because we respect your time and are sensible of your many serious cares. Castle Howard befriended me when I wanted friends; I shall never forget it, till I forget all.

I remain, with respectful affection, your friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

538.] To CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

56, *Green-street, Feb.* 21*st*, 1844.

Dear Dickens,

Many thanks for the 'Christmas Carol,' which I shall immediately proceed upon, in preference to six American pamphlets I found upon my arrival, all promising immediate payment! Yours ever,

SYDNEY SMITH.

539.] To THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

I give two dinners next week to the following persons, whom I enumerate, as I know Lady Georgiana loves a little gossip. First dinner—Lady Holland, Eastlake, Lord and Lady Monteagle, Luttrell, Lord

Auckland, Lord Campbell, Lady Stratheden, Lady Dunstanville, Baring Wall, and Mr. Hope. Second dinner—Lady Charlemont, Lord Glenelg, Lord and Lady Denman, Lord and Lady Cottenham, Lord and Lady Langdale, Sir Charles Lemon, Mr. Hibbert, Landseer, and Lord Clarendon.

The Ministry are very much vexed at the majority of Lord Ashley, and are making great efforts to beat him; and it does seem to be absurd to hinder a woman of thirty from working as long as she pleases; but mankind are getting mad with humanity and Samaritanism.

I preached the other Sunday a sermon on peace, and against the excessive proneness to war; and I read them two or three extracts from the accounts of victories. It was very much liked. I shall try the same subject again,—a subject utterly untouched by the clergy.

I am reading the Letters to George Selwyn, which entertain me a good deal, though I think it a shameful publication. The picture of the year is to be Jairus's Daughter, by Eddis.

We are all tolerably well here, and send a thousand regards to all. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

540.] To THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green-street, Feb. 28th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am quite delighted to learn from so many sources that Lord Grey is so much better, and I trust we shall see him in town after Easter.

What news have I to tell you? Nothing but what the papers will tell you better. Howick's speech is universally praised for its honesty and ability. I think O'Connell will have two years' imprisonment, and the Government and the Irish Courts have come off much better than it was supposed they would do.

We have not very good accounts from Castle Howard. There is a rumour that Lord Ashburton is employed in holy flirting with the Pope. The common idea, that a *præmunire* is incurred by these flirtations, or that there is any law enacting penalties for communications with his Holiness, is erroneous.

Four volumes of Burke's 'Letters to the Marquis of Rockingham' are about to be published. I am not sorry to come to London. I have been living upon commonplaces and truisms for three months. I always fatten and stupefy on such diet; I want to lose flesh and gain understanding. The new Lady —— dined with Lady —— on Sunday. I thought she would have fainted. The page always has sal-volatile at hand for first introductions.

Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

541.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

God bless you, and support you in great trials, such as the illness of so good and great a man, and one who has played so distinguished a part in the events of these times! Convey to him my ardent wishes for his safety and exemption from pain. I am a great believer in his constitution, and feel sure that we

shall yet have many conversations about the wonderful things of this world.

I send you a very honest and sensible sermon,—so little like most sermons, that I think our dear Earl might read it, or have it read to him; but let that honest Howick read it, who loves everything that is bold, and true, and honest; and send it back to me when it is done with. Only think of the iniquity of young ——. No sooner does he find himself extricated from poverty and misery, than the first thing he does is to turn out a poor curate, the son of the former vicar, before his father! His conduct has been quite abominable.

I go on Tuesday, for two or three days, to Bowood, where a large party is assembled: amongst the rest, Lady Holland. We are dying of heat. I sleep with my windows open every night. The birds are all taken in, and building; the foolish flowers are blowing. Human creatures alone are in the secret, and know what is to happen in a week or two.

I met Mr. —— in town. I have never joined in the general admiration for this person. I think his manners rude and insolent. His conversation is an eternal persiflage, and is therefore wearisome. It seems as if he did not think it worth while to talk sense or seriousness before his company, and that he had a right to abandon himself to any nonsense which happened to come uppermost; which nonsense many of his company remembered to have come uppermost often before. I receive every day from America letters and pamphlets without end. I verily believe the United States are cracking. A nation cannot exist in such a state of morals.

Give my kindest and most affectionate regards to Lord Grey; and believe me ever, dear Lady Grey, your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

542.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green-street, March 9th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

With your occupations and anxieties, I hold you entirely acquitted for not writing to me, and pray let this be understood between us. I take so much interest in Lord Grey's recovery, that I am rejoiced to see your handwriting, but always afraid that your own health will suffer by gratifying the affectionate curiosity of your friends.

The Whigs and Democrats are full of a notion that O'Connell is not to be punished; that the Government, yielding to the opinion that his trial has been unfair, are not to bring him up for judgment. I am not of this opinion. I think, unless their own law-officers were to tell them that this trial had been unfair, the Government are bound to deal with O'Connell as they would with any one else; and I believe they will do so. I have heard some of our English judges say his sentence ought to be for two years. As for the danger of shutting him up, if you cannot do that, then there is a civil war; and the sooner it is fought out, the better.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Kindest regards to my Lord.

SYDNEY SMITH.

543.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am beginning Burke's Letters, or rather, have gone through one volume; full of details which do not interest me, and there are no signs yet of that beautiful and fruitful imagination which is the great charm of Burke. With the politics of so remote a period I do not concern myself.

The weather is improved here, and the harvest is got in; and a very good harvest it is.

I hope Lord Grey observes the ministerial relaxations towards the Catholics. It is a very difficult question to know what to do with O'Connell. The only question is, the pacification of Ireland, and the effect that his detention or liberation would produce upon that country. All private pique and anger must be swallowed up in this paramount object. Lord Heytesbury is a man of good sense. I have no fear of a French war as long as Louis Philippe is alive; and live he will, for they cannot hit him, and seem to have left off shooting at him in despair. After that, nothing but nonsense and folly; but before then, I shall probably be dead myself.

You talk of your climate: I dare say it has its evils, but nothing so bad as the enervating character of this. It would unstring the nerves of a giant, and demoralize the soul of Cato. We have just sent off a cargo of London people, who have been staying here three weeks. They say that all their principles and virtues are gone! My kindest regards to your noble patient.

SYDNEY SMITH.

544.] To Miss G. Harcourt.

Combe Florey, 1844.

My dear Georgiana,

I set off in despair of reaching home, but, on the contrary, Mrs. Sydney got better every scream of the railroad, and is now considerably improved. Many thanks for your kind and friendly inquiries. I was confined three days in London waiting for Mrs. Sydney's recovery: they seemed months. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the country; I am forced to own that.

I have been reading Arnold's Life, by Stanley. Arnold seems to have been a very pious, honest, learned, and original man.

I hope the Archbishop has resumed the use of his legs; for if an archbishop be a pillar of the Church, and the pillar cannot stand, what becomes of the incumbent weight? And neither of us, dear Georgiana, would consent to survive the ruin of the Church. You would plunge a poisoned pin into your heart, and I should swallow the leaf of a sermon dipped in hydrocyanic acid. —— would probably rejoice in the loss of us both, for in her Church the greater the misery, the greater the happiness; they rejoice in woe, and wallow in dolours.

Be a good girl, and write me a line every now and then, to tell me about my old friends; and believe me to be always your affectionate friend,

S. S.

545.] To the Countess Grey.

Green-street, Grosvenor-square,
March 27th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I think Channing an admirable writer. So much sense and eloquence! such a command of language! Yet admirable as his sermon on war is, I have the vanity to think my own equally good, quite as sensible, quite as eloquent, as full of good principle and fine language; and you will be the more inclined to agree with me in this comparison, when I tell you that I preached in St. Paul's the identical sermon which Lord Grey so much admires. I thought I could not write anything half so good, so I preached Channing.

You can hardly expect to go on straightforward in recovering; sometimes you will stop, sometimes recover twice as much in one week as you have done in three weeks preceding. If this day is with you as it is with us, it ought to be the first of going out. It is real Spring.

What an odd state politics are in! It is not at all impossible that Ministers will go out. God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

Sydney Smith.

546.] To the Countess Grey.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

Your account seems good of Lord Grey. I envy him the taste of fresh air after such a long confinement, to say nothing of the fine feeling which cessation from pain produces; not that I would be ill, but

that I consider these feelings as some little abatement of evil.

The Government are to have this year, I understand, a very splendid budget; but obtained, of course, by the pernicious auxiliary of the Income Tax.

What a singular event,—these divisions upon the working hours of the common people! The protection of children is perhaps right; but everything beyond is mischief and folly. It is generally believed, that if the Ten Hours Bill is carried, Government will resign. I am a decided duodecimalist. —— is losing his head. When he brings forward his Suckling Act, he will be considered as quite mad. No woman to be allowed to suckle her own child without medical certificates. Three classes—viz. free sucklers, half sucklers, and spoon-meat mothers. Mothers whose supply is uncertain, to suckle upon affidavit! How is it possible that an Act of Parliament can supply the place of nature and natural affection? Have you any nonsense equal to this in Northumberland?

I think I could write a good sermon against war, but I doubt if I shall preach any more. It makes me ill; I get violently excited, and tire myself to death.

—— is gone to Paris. He made a sensation at the Drawing-room, by asking the Queen, at some length, if he could take parcels or letters for her!

I have some thoughts of going to Brighton tomorrow, but I believe indolence will prevail. I pray for fine weather for Lord Grey. It will be his cure when it does come.

God bless you!

S. S.

547.] To the Countess Grey.

April 22nd, 1844.

I hear from all quarters, dear Lady Grey, that Lord Grey is going on as well as possible; that is, that he is keeping pace with my hopes and wishes. Has Lord Grey read the Edinburgh Review? The article on Barrère is by Macaulay, that upon Lord St. Vincent by Barrow. I think the latter very entertaining; but it was hardly worth while to crucify Barrère: Macaulay might as well have selected Turpin.

I have no news to tell you. It is generally thought the Duke of Wellington has been unguarded about the Directors. Peel's Bank plan is admired and approved; so is the appointment of Hardinge.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

Yours affectionately,

Sydney Smith.

548.] To the Countess Grey.

May 29th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am afraid you are not going on so well as heretofore, and I am almost afraid to ask you your present condition: therefore do as you are inclined, and if to send me such news as you have to send gives you pain, do not send it.

Mrs. Sydney had a sharp attack of pain yesterday, which prevented us from going to Lady Essex's play, which has been acted with universal approbation in Belgrave-square. I was very glad not to be there, as I am sure I should have been tired to death. If real

actors cannot amuse me, how should pretended actors do so? Can mock-turtle please where real turtle is disliked?

I think we now have O'Connell safe between walls. I look upon his punishment as one of the most useful events which have taken place in my time. It vindicates the law, shows the subject that the Government is not to be braved, and puts an end for many years to the blustering and bullying of Ireland. Their perseverance is creditable to Ministers. There was, my dear Lady Grey, a serious intention to go out; but it was too ridiculous.

I am inclined to think you are going on tolerably well, for I ask everybody who is likely to know, and make out the best account I can; but your own case puzzles me.

I am going to dine with —— today. The rumour increases of her having murdered Dr. ——. The question is, Where is he? What was that large box taken away at two in the morning?

Read Arnold's Life, by Stanley, and Twiss's Life of Lord Eldon. The latter is not badly done, and I think it would much amuse Lord Grey, as it is the history almost of his times. Lord Eldon was the bigoted enemy of every sort of improvement; and retarded, by his influence, for more than twenty-five years, those changes which the state of the country absolutely required. Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

549.] To M. Eugène Robin.*

Paris, June 29th, 1844.

Sir,

Your application to me does me honour, and requires, on your part, no sort of apology.

It is scarcely possible to speak much of self, and I have little or nothing to tell which has not been told before in my preface.

I am seventy-four years of age; and being Canon of St. Paul's in London, and a rector of a parish in the country, my time is divided equally between town and country. I am living amongst the best society in the Metropolis, and at ease in my circumstances; in tolerable health, a mild Whig, a tolerating Churchman, and much given to talking, laughing, and noise. I dine with the rich in London, and physic the poor in the country; passing from the sauces of Dives to the sores of Lazarus. I am, upon the whole, a happy man; have found the world an entertaining world, and am thankful to Providence for the part allotted to me in it. If you wish to become more informed respecting the actor himself, I must refer you to my friend Van de Weyer, who knows me well, and is able (if he will condescend to do so) to point out the good and the evil within me. If you come to London, I hope you will call on me, and enable me to make your acquaintance; and in the meantime I beg you to accept every assurance of my consideration and respect.

Sydney Smith.

* M. Eugène Robin had made an application to Mr. Sydney Smith, through Mr. Van de Weyer, for some particulars of his life, of which he wished to give a sketch in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes.'

550.] To his Excellency M. Van de Weyer.

Combe Florey, July 31*st*, 1844.

Dear Van de Weyer,

Have not some letters been published in modern times, containing the remonstrances of Alva to Philip, and of Philip to Alva, against the cruelties practised by the Spaniards in the Low Countries, and recommending milder measures? and if so, pray tell me in what book such letters are to be found. Have you seen a History of Holland, in three volumes, by a Mrs. Davis, published by Walton, Strand; or heard any character of it?

How do you do, and all the family? Will you come to the West,—I mean to Combe Florey,—in the month of August? and what day? Will you believe me (as you safely may) yours sincerely?

Sydney Smith.

551.] To Mrs. Grote.

Combe Florey, July, 1844.

Dear Mrs. Grote,

Our squire died the very day we came home. Do you want any land?

I have been reading the Life of Arnold of Rugby, who seems to be a learned, pure, and honest Liberal; and with much zeal and unaffected piety. From this I proceeded to the life of the most heartless, bigoted, and mischievous of human beings, who passed a long life in perpetuating all sorts of abuses, and in making money by them.

I am afraid this country does look enchantingly beautiful; you know the power truth has over me. There is nothing new,—I will not say under the sun, for we have no sun in England,—but under the fogs and clouds. The best thing I have seen for some time is the declaration of the Government, of their good intentions towards the Roman Catholics.

I am not expecting any particular person, but generally, all mankind and womankind.

Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

552.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, August, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

I have been leading a very musical life lately. There is an excellent musical family living in London; and finding them all ill, and singing flat, I brought them down here for three weeks, where they have grown extremely corpulent, and have returned to London, with no other wish than to be transported after this life to this paradise of Combe Florey. Their singing is certainly very remarkable, and the little boy, at the age of seven, composes hymns; I mean, sets them to music. I have always said that if I were to begin life again, I would dedicate it to music; it is the only cheap and unpunished rapture upon earth.

—— —— has not yet signified her intentions under the sign manual; but a thousand rumours reach me, and my firm belief is, she will come. I have spoken to the sheriff, and mentioned it to the magistrates. They have agreed to address her; and she is

to be escorted from the station by the yeomanry. The clergy are rather backward; but I think that, after a little bashfulness, they will wait upon her. Brunel, assisted by the ablest philosophers, is to accompany her upon the railroad; and they have been so good as to say that the steam shall be generated from soft water, with a slight infusion of chamomile flowers.

I am glad to see that Sir Robert Peel is softening a little towards the Catholics. That is the great point, in comparison of which Pomaré and Morocco are nothing.

I think we shall go for some days to the sea-side. I wish we could find such an invigorating air as you have at Scarborough; but our atmosphere is soft, demoralizing, and debilitating. All love of duty, all sense of propriety, are extinguished in these enervating climates. The only one of my Yorkshire virtues which I retain, is a sincere regard for Castle Howard and its inhabitants; to whom health and prosperity, and every earthly blessing! From your obliged and sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

553.] To DR. HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, August, 1844.

My dear Holland,

I ought to have answered your letter before, but I have been so strenuously employed in doing nothing, that I have not had time to do so. Whatever Mrs. Sydney may say of herself, I think she is very languid from her late attack in London, and that she needs the sea-side; and there I mean to go for some

days. Jeffrey is under the care of a committee, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Empson, his wife, the footman, and a Highland nurse, and they report to his admirers, consisting of several scores of young ladies, and others well advanced in years; it is a science by itself, the management of that little man, and I am afraid, unless you could affect all the committee simultaneously with the principal, your science would be in vain.

I hope you will have good weather for your journey. Beg of all your party, when they come in at night, fatigued, hungry, and exhausted, to sit down and write their journals, but not to show them to me. I keep clear of gout, but always imagine I am going off in an apoplexy or palsy, and that the death-warrant is come down. I saw the other day, in midday, a ball of fire, with a tail as long as the garden, rush across the heavens, and descend towards the earth; that it had some allusion to me and my affairs I did not doubt, but could not tell what, till I found the cow had slipped her calf: this made all clear.

Ever yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

554.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 20th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I don't hear a word about the war, but your correspondents are much more likely to be well-informed upon this point than mine. There are not two more intelligent men in the kingdom than Wood and

Howick; and they write from the great news-market. I mean to go, on Tuesday, 27th, to the sea-side, at Sidmouth, with Mrs. Sydney, there to stay some days. It is exactly a place to suit you to winter in; so warm, beautiful, and sheltered;—and very good houses for nothing.

I am thinking of writing a pamphlet to urge the necessity of paying the Catholic clergy; but the ideas are all so trite, and the arguments so plain and easy, that I gape at the thoughts of such a production. Lord Grey can have no doubt of the wisdom of paying the Catholic clergy. I should like very much to go to Ireland for a fortnight; I am sure I could learn a great deal in that time; but the indolence, the timidity, and the uncertain health of old-age keep me at home.

Don't talk of giving up the world,—we shall all meet again in Berkeley-square. Lady Georgiana will play the harp, the physician will sing, —— will look melancholy, and Lady Caroline will be making shrewd remarks to herself; I shall be all that is orthodox and proper; Lord Grey will be inclined to laugh.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

S. S.

555.] To the Countess of Carlisle.

Combe Florey, Aug. 25th, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

I think the enclosed will amuse Lord Carlisle. Mr. Wainwright* is known to Morpeth, as well as to my-

* A distinguished minister of the Episcopalian Church, United States, since dead.

self, and is a most amiable clergyman, who paid a visit to this country two or three years since.

The fact is unknown to any of his congregation, but when in this country, he went once to the Opera, and supped with Lord Lyndhurst afterwards. In private, he often wore a short cassock, like a bishop's, and looked at himself for a long time in the glass. He carried over one of these cassocks to America, that Mrs. Wainwright might see him in it.

We are going for a week to Sidmouth, that paradise of the waves.

" SYDNEY SMITH.

556.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

No date.

My dear Lady Carlisle.

Do not let Morpeth persuade you that Alexis is anything but an impostor. There seems to be something missing in London; and I find, upon reflection, it is Lord Carlisle and yourself.

The Archbishop of York is laid up with a sprained ankle; sprained at a christening! How very singular! It is such a quiescent ceremony, that I thought I might have guaranteed at its celebration all the ligaments of the human body. He is never a moment without a bishop or a dowager duchess coming to call.

What shall I say of my unworthy self, but that I am well, rich, and tolerably healthy? Mrs. Sydney has no great illness, though much *malaise*. I hear that Lord Carlisle is wheeled down to the gallery, and gets a little fresh air at the door. I know all the *locale* so well that I see him in his transit, and he takes with him my best and kindest wishes wherever he goes.

Sir Robert Peel and I have made friends; and so you will say, dear Lady Carlisle, that I want to be a bishop. But I thank God often that I am not a bishop; and I want nothing in this world but the friendship and goodwill of such good persons as yourself.

Alas! how short is a sheet of paper! What remains must convey my affection and respect to my excellent friends at Castle Howard. And may God bless them!

SYDNEY SMITH.

557.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Sidmouth, Aug. 29th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I think I shall turn out to be right, and that there will be no war immediately. What the scramble for the fragments of the Mahometan empire may produce ultimately in the Mediterranean, I know not; but I would lay a wager we are not at war before Christmas. I offer you a bet of five shillings to that effect; if you think this venture indiscreetly large, Georgiana will, I dare say, take half.

We are at Sidmouth. It is extremely beautiful, but quite deserted. I have nothing to do but to look out of window, and am *ennuied*. The events which have turned up are, a dog and a monkey for a show, and a morning concert; and I rather think we shall have an invitation to tea. I say to every one who sits near me on the marine benches, that it is a fine day, and that the prospect is beautiful; but we get no further. I can get no water out of a dry rock.

There arrived, the other day, at New York, a Syd-

ney Smith.* A meeting was called, and it was proposed to tar-and-feather him; but the amendment was carried, that he should be invited to a public dinner. He turned out to be a journeyman cooper! My informant encloses for me an invitation from the bishop of the diocese to come and see him, and a proposition that we should travel together to the Falls of Niagara!

Ever, dear Lady Grey, affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

558.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

I should say, my dear Lady Grey, that, upon the whole, the O'Connell business has not ended unfavourably. The Government has not done anything shabby or timid, but, on the contrary, has acted with spirit. They have been badly served by their law-servants, but that is not their fault. The evil will not end, nor the business be settled, without a battle.

Read travels in the East, called 'Eōthen.' They are by a Mr. Kinglake, of Taunton, a chancery barrister, and are written in a lively manner. They will amuse Lord Grey, who, I presume, is read to regularly every day.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Kind regards to Lord Grey, of whom I am in weekly hopes of receiving a better account.

SYDNEY SMITH.

See Memoir, page 306.

559.] To his Excellency M. Van de Weyer.

Combe Florey, Sept. 17th, 1844.

Dear Van de Weyer,

Many thanks for your proffered loan of the book from which you took the letters you were so good as to send me, of Alva and Philip; but as I never return books, I make a rule never to borrow them. I shall send the title of the work you have been so kind as to mention to my authoress, and of course there can be no objection to her printing a quotation from the printed work. I have not mentioned your name. I shall not trouble you for any further information on this topic, because I must extricate myself from this lady, who (though clever, and in a situation perfectly independent) I am afraid will bore me. You have so recently suffered this alarm from me, that you will, I am sure, understand how I should fall into similar apprehensions.

I am very sorry you have been and are unwell; you have had too much to do. I am (in common with many other gentlemen in orders) suffering from the very opposite cause.

Rumours of wars reach me on every side; my only confidence is, that the Governments on both sides of the water wish for peace.

We are expecting Mrs. —— ——, who perhaps has never occurred to you in a rural point of view.

I remain, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

Sydney Smith.

560.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Sept. 25th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

Lord Grey understands these matters better than I do, but I do not see how the reversal of O'Connell's sentence can injure, morally, the House of Lords. It was (I have no doubt) the honest decision of the majority of those who, from their legal habits, and attention to the case, had a right to decide; and that the lay Lords abstained from voting was surely an act of honesty. It shows, however, the absurd constitution of a court of justice, where ninety-nine of the hundred judges are utterly incapable of forming any just opinion of the subject.

I mean to write a pamphlet upon the payment of the Catholic and Presbyterian clergy in Ireland; the honest payment—without any attempt to gain power over them. Their refusal to take it is no conclusive objection, and they would take it *a poco a poco*, if it were honestly given. We must have a regular Ambassador residing at the Court of Rome; patronage must be divided with an even hand between Catholic and Protestant; all their alleged wrongs about land must be impartially examined, and, if just, be speedily redressed; a large army be kept ready for immediate action, and the law be put in force against O'Connell and O'Connellism, in spite of all previous failures. Will Lord Grey or Howick dissent from these obvious principles?

Adieu, dear Lady Grey!

Sydney Smith.

561.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Oct. 5th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I had a smart attack of giddiness on Tuesday, which alarmed me a good deal. The doctor said it was stomach, and has put me under the most rigid rules; I will try to follow them.

I think 'Ireland and its Leaders' worth reading, and beg of you to tell me who wrote it, if you happen to know; for though you call yourself solitary, you live much more in the world than I do, while in the country.

Have you noticed the abuse of St. Paul's in the 'Times'? I was moved to write, but I kept silence, though it was pain and grief to me. Read Captain Marryat's 'Settlers in Canada.'

Sydney Smith.

562.] To the Countess Grey.

Combe Florey, Oct. 11th, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I rather think that last week they wanted to kill me, but I was too sharp for them. I am now tolerably well, but I am weak, and taking all proper care of myself; which care consists in eating nothing that I like, and doing nothing that I wish. I sent you yesterday the triumph of a fellow-sufferer with Lord Grey. Tell me fairly the effect such a narrative produces upon him. The greatest consolation to me is, to find that others are suffering as much as I do. I would not inflict suffering upon them; I would contribute actively

to prevent it; but if it do come after this, I must confess

Always affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

I shall be in London the 22nd and 25th.

See what rural life is:—

Combe Florey Gazette.

Mr. Smith's large red cow is expected to calve this week.

Mr. Gibbs has bought Mr Smith's lame mare.

It rained yesterday, and, a correspondent observes, is not unlikely to rain today.

Mr. Smith is better.

Mrs. Smith is indisposed.

A nest of black magpies was found near the village yesterday.

563.] TO DR. HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, October, 1844.

My dear Holland,

I cannot let this post pass over without thanking you for one of the very best letters I ever read, to say nothing of its great kindness. It is a tolerably good day with me today; Lyddon says my pulse is better, but I am very weak; I think also my breathing is better. I rather lean to coming up to London.

Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

564.] To Dr. Holland.

Combe Florey, 1844.

Scale of Dining.

Gruel.
Broth.
Pudding.
Panada.
Mutton-chop.
Roast and boiled.

Dear Holland,—I am only at broth at present, but Lyddon thinks I shall get to pudding tomorrow, and mutton-chops the next day. I long for promotion.

Yours affectionately,

Sydney Smith.

565.] To the Countess of Carlisle.

56, *Green-street, Oct.* 21*st*, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

From your ancient goodness to me, I am sure you will be glad to receive a bulletin from myself, informing you that I am making a good progress; in fact, I am in a regular train of promotion: from gruel, vermicelli, and sago, I was promoted to panada, from thence to minced meat, and (such is the effect of good conduct) I was elevated to a mutton-chop. My breathlessness and giddiness are gone—chased away by the gout. If you hear of sixteen or eighteen pounds of human flesh, they belong to me. I look as if a curate had been taken out of me. I am delighted to hear such improved accounts of my fellow-sufferer at Castle

Howard. Lady —— is severe in her medical questions; but I detail the most horrible symptoms, at which she takes flight.

Accept, my dear Lady Carlisle, my best wishes for Lord Carlisle and all the family.

SYDNEY SMITH.

566.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

56, *Green-street, Nov. 7th*, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I have been seriously ill, and I do not think I am yet quite "clear of the wood," but am certainly a good deal better. My complaints have been giddiness, breathlessness, and weakness of the digestive organs. I believe I acted wisely in setting off for London on the first attack; it has secured for me the proximity and best attentions of Dr. Holland, and the use of a comfortable house, where a suite of rooms are perfectly fitted up for illness and death.

I have a great notion you can send me better accounts of Lord Grey;—pray do, and give him my earnest and sincere regard.

SYDNEY SMITH.

THE END.

JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR, PRINTER,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

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